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The Week

EVERY little New England town has its Calvin Coolidge, and the type has spread throughout the nation. The close-lipped lawyer, who creates the reputation of being taciturn but really says a great deal, the man who pinches pennies and almost never accepts a new idea, the politician who deals shrewdly with the more powerful groups in order to advance his own interest and theirs, the homely philosopher who never for a moment imagines that the precepts of a small farming and trading community do not furnish ample guidance for a high-powered machine civilization—this type is so familiar that millions of people regard it with almost instinctive affection and trust. In contrast with the high-pressure salesman and the hooey-dripping business executive he is indeed a refreshing figure. The fact that such a man as President at a critical period of our history made almost every important mistake that could be made about the fundamental direction of our society should not be held against him. He was a product of tradition and environment just as truly as the racketeer in the city is the consequence of social forces. One can be glad that in the last years of his life he was saved the bewilderment and the unpopularity which would surely have come to him if he had been forced to accept public responsibility for the consequences of the events which occurred while he was in the White House.

PRESIDENT-ELECT Roosevelt's plan to increase revenue by raising the normal rates and lowering the exemptions of the income tax is as sound as it is unpopular among politicians and the more vocal section of the public. It is well to remember that the federal income tax, even at its lowest levels, now applies only to a small minority of the income-receivers in the nation—a minority which, in comparison with the great average, must be called rich. The increase suggested would not constitute a real hardship to many to whom it applied. What makes it seem like a hardship is that it has to be paid in a lump, and by the conscious act of drawing a check. A general sales tax would no doubt cost individual consumers almost as much, but it would have the disadvantage of being a burden also upon those who are too poor to come within the income-tax group at all. These persons now have enough tax burdens in the form of indirect payments caused by protective tariffs, excise taxes of various kinds, and property taxes which are transferred to rents. The American public must be brought face to face with the fact that there is no way to balance the federal budget, or to come anywhere near it, except by digging deeper into individual pockets. If budget-balancing is to be our program, we shall have to pay for it. And the more plainly the citizens are made to see this uncomfortable fact, the better it will be all round.

MR. Roosevelt's tax program ought not to stop with the normal rates, however. Surtaxes in the upper brackets ought to be increased as well. The fact that this would not now bring in a great deal of revenue is not a telling argument against it; when and if revival comes, profits will be the first

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kind of income to gain, and we shall need heavy contributions from the big incomes to repay the borrowings of the depression as quickly as possible. Numerous other types of revision ought to be made in the income tax. There are leaks to be stopped. A fairer and more efficient way of dealing with capital gains and losses ought to be adopted (there is such a way). Scarcely less important would be the passage of an exemption applying in states which levy income taxes; this would encourage the states to use this scientific form of taxation and would equalize the burden on individuals of a given income, no matter in what state they live. Drastic increases in the inheritance tax are even more justifiable and desirable than in the income tax. Finally, if a way could be found to levy on the surplus profits of corporations, a tremendous improvement in our tax system would be possible.

PRESIDENT Hoover is talking as if the disinclination of Congress to permit him to reorganize governmental departments is going to prevent him from saving the country a lot of money. Mr. Roosevelt is laying his plans as if he thought that he could save a tremendous amount by such reorganization. But the belief that any considerable economies are possible by this means is pure delusion. Hasty reorganization, dictated by the desire to pare expenses, is sure to do a great deal of harm without materially benefiting the budget. Of every dollar spent by the government this year, less than fifteen cents goes to civilian activities. Cut this in half (a preposterous proposal) and you save only 7 percent of the budget. Most of the money goes to debt charges, veterans and the army and navy. Here, if anywhere, substantial savings are possible. Reorganization of governmental departments, commissions and bureaus is indeed desirable, but mainly for the purpose of getting more and better service for the money we spend rather than for the purpose of cutting expenditures. Reorganization of this kind, however, cannot be done in a hurry and in a panic about economy. It takes careful planning, plus a broader philosophy concerning what we really want the government to do.

JAPAN is now frankly invading Chinese territory proper, as it has long been expected that she would. The course of her logic is the old and familiar one of militarist imperialism. Manchuria had to be seized to protect Japan, Jehol had to be seized to protect Manchuria, and now Chiumenekow, where there is a pass through the Great Wall, has been seized to protect Jehol. The military logic is unassailable, once you grant its premises. No doubt the Japanese authorities are speaking the literal truth when they say that if they leave this gateway in Chinese hands, Jehol and Manchuria will be overrun with spies. They must hold it also because it is the gateway through which Chang Hsiao-liang has been sending troops and supplies. It may not be long before the same sort of thing is being said (and truthfully) about Peiping. Indeed, as long as Japan leaves a foot of Chinese territory in the hands of any Chinese government, there will be a source of potential danger to her. The logic works out perfectly to the conclusion that any nation which makes an enemy of another nation is in peril as long as the enemy nation lives. We do not see that a moral judgment concerning Japan's present course is called for, or would be relevant to the course of events if made. But the observation is certainly justified that persons and nations who care for their own security would be reckless indeed if they risked a single cent or a single calculation on the future stability of Japan.

JOSEPH STALIN in his recent speech to the leaders of the Russian Communist party placed an interpretation on the Five Year Plan which is not often emphasized in discussion of it here. The rapid development of industry was necessary to lay a basis for the collectivization of agriculture. As long as the small individualist peasant remained, according to Bolshevist philosophy, there would be a danger to the socialist system in industry itself. While socialist industry was destroying capitalism, individualist agriculture would be breeding capitalist elements. But in order to socialize agriculture it was of course necessary to have modern machinery, and in order to get this in sufficient quantity and quickly enough, it was necessary to build up a great heavy industry. Having laid the foundations of this, the Communist leadership has decided now to relax the tempo a little and pay more attention to turning out consumers' goods. Doubtless they believe that these as well are essential to retaining the consent of the peasants for any socialization program. While Stalin did not emphasize it, military considerations too probably dictated the desirability of building up basic industry in a socialist state surrounded by potential capitalist enemies.

THE support given by many important personages to the attitude of President A. P. Sloan of General Motors that research ought to be continued and mechanical improvements ought to be introduced in the future as in the past will be approved by persons having as diverse economic and political opinions as capitalists, Communists and Technocrats. We know of no school of thought having more than a gleam of intelligence which really wants the advance of applied science to stop. If, therefore, Mr. Sloan intended to convey any reassurance concerning the future of our economic system by his statement and questionnaire, he was talking beside the point. Most of those who criticize the present order do so precisely for the reason that it hampers the enjoyment of the results of technical advance by large sections

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of the population, and for long periods at a time. As the President's Committee on Social Trends has just pointed out, if we are not to slow down the utilization of mechanical invention, we shall have to speed up social invention. We must create new economic and political forms to see that technical advance serves social purposes. If Mr. Sloan and other business executives were really alive to the existing situation, and were fitted to be economic leaders of the nation, they would emphasize this aspect of the matter rather than rely on the old and shop-worn formula of stimulating mechanical change while suppressing all other kinds.

IN THESE days of reduced tax returns it is incumbent upon the cultural institutions now supported by local, state or national governments to prove their right to assistance. And the case of all of them will be strengthened if they work in coöperation with each other. In the past, librarians have usually accepted the leadership of other groups, but a new and more aggressive note was sounded at the mid-winter meeting of the American Library Association. Mr. Frank L. Tolman, director of the Extension Division of the New York State Education Department, asked the council of the association to take the leadership in uniting other agencies to combat the reduction of governmentally supported cultural institutions, on the ground that librarians were "in a detached and impartial position" and able to accept those duties. Resolutions adopted were not simply national in scope. Local library boards were called upon to take the lead in their own districts in "developing, adopting and promulgating a citizen's platform" which would include all cultural activities, and which could be subscribed to by other local organizations. Only concrete action by local groups will convince appropriating bodies that savings must be made through efficient operation of government rather than through cuts in the budgets of cultural institutions.

A FEW years ago, a wave of enthusiasm for "public forums" swept over the country. We were told that in such organizations, where the citizenry could freely discuss the nation's affairs and make up their own minds about them, lay the hope of democracy; and large numbers of these forums were started, mostly under church auspices, in all parts of the country. These bright hopes have been largely discounted with the passage of time, though many forums still continue. It has been discovered that a successful forum requires a man of remarkable personality as leader; and also that as a rule there is not much more freedom of thought and opinion in them than there is in the press and pulpit. Now, however, there comes a new experiment which may do something to rehabilitate the forum movement. In the city of Des Moines, Iowa, with the aid of a large grant from the Carnegie Corporation, an experiment is under way in which a series of forums will be established as an adjunct to the public-school system and under the supervision of J. W. Studebaker, Des Moines' able superintendent of schools. Several highly paid and, presumably, thoroughly competent leaders will conduct discussion groups in various parts of the city at which all the pressing economic problems of our time and the various proposed remedies will be threshed out by the members of the groups. Mr. Studebaker's plans are predicated upon complete freedom of speech and the frank discussion of every proposed reform of society, including the proposals of single-taxers, Socialists, Communists, etc. The experiment is one which is certain to be watched by others with wide interest and, if it is successful, extensively imitated.

PRESIDENT Charles A. Miller of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation has told the Senate Committee on Manufactures that the plan for relief of unemployment suggested by Mr. Fred I. Kent of the American Bankers' Association is the best that has been proposed. According to this plan, the banks of the country would discover from their industrial clients how many men and how much money would be needed to resume operations at the 1927 level. How much raw material would be required, and what would be the character of the production? The data would be coördinated by the Federal Reserve Banks and the R.F.C. If the latter approved, the banks would then be empowered to lend to industry the necessary money, and would be guaranteed by the R.F.C. against any loss arising from a failure of the borrowers to repay the loans out of the proceeds of their activity. This is an ingenious scheme, but it does not go far enough. It is obvious that we cannot now reconstitute the situation of 1927. The character of demand has changed; prices and wages have changed; fixed obligations have changed. Nobody could tell whether industry would begin to hum if we started it again on the 1927 basis of output, but the chances are strong that it would not. Recovery waits for more than confidence and credit resources. No plan is really a good one which does not take into account many complex factors of the economic order. People persist in making the mistaken assumption that we can go back and do the same thing all over again in the same old way.

THE extraordinary difference in the amount of relief provided for male and female unemployed becomes even more remarkable upon examination of a report recently issued by the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The report specifically covers the meals and lodgings provided in twenty metropolitan areas, by the specially organized relief bureaus for the homeless and transient, during the first nine months of 1932, and reveals

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that in some cases no relief for women and children was provided by the agencies reporting. In Cleveland, for example, where 1,052,025 meals were provided by three agencies, only eight were given to women and only twenty to children; in Chicago, where sixteen agencies provided 7,821,924 meals, 291,967 were for women and 45,000 for children. In some sections, notably around Kansas City, Omaha and Providence, relief for women and children formed a relatively important task of the agencies caring for the homeless and transient, but for the most part this aspect of the relief problem is left to agencies not directly connected with the central bureaus, or not reporting. The report also reveals that the amount of relief provided declined during 1932; and that while food and lodging provided for men was subject to seasonal change, that provided by the few agencies for women and children was constant during the first nine months of the year. Although the report is obviously incomplete, it is clear that the relief for men is much more highly organized throughout the country than the relief for women, while what is being done for homeless children is becoming one of the darkest historical mysteries of our time.

ON PAGE 265 of the present issue there appears a description of the tactics employed by the Nebraska farmers in their efforts to prevent foreclosure sales. That these farmers are not alone in this agrarian movement is daily becoming more evident; the method they employ to prevent foreclosures seems to be sweeping the country. During the past two weeks the following incidents have been picked at random from the daily papers. At Greencastle, Pennsylvania, several hundred farmers gathered and bid in a farm that was being sold on foreclosure proceedings at prices ranging from sixty cents for a Chevrolet to ten cents for a horse. In Canada a tax sale was stopped by a mob of farmers and the collector was forced to resign. In Iowa crowds of farmers blocked the efforts of three county treasurers to sell property on which taxes were overdue, no one daring to bid in the property. At Le Mars, Iowa, a mob of farmers, threatening to lynch an agent at a foreclosure sale, forced him to raise his bid to the amount of the mortgage. Farmers in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania, at foreclosure sales bought in the property of several farmers for a few dollars and turned it over to the original owners. In Logan, Iowa, a case involving a farm receivership and a sheriff's sale of six properties was postponed in the presence of 700 farmers who jammed the court. These are probably only a few of the actual cases, but the fact that they have occurred in widely separated sections of the country would seem to prove that the agrarian revolt is not only extensive but that the tactics employed by the farmers are becoming increasingly direct.

The Consumer and the Farm Bill

NOW THAT the Jones bill, embodying the voluntary domestic-allotment plan for farm relief, has been introduced into Congress, opposition to the scheme is becoming more articulate. This opposition, as was foreseen, centers largely about the idea that the plan is designed to raise the prices of farm products to consumers. In so far as the farmer may benefit from it, the consumer is likely to suffer. Like a protective tariff, it aims to subsidize one section of the population at the expense of another. How can such a device be of permanent or lasting benefit? How can it be just?

The New English Weekly, looking at the proposal from a further distance than American objectors, expresses the objection in more rounded theoretical terms. It takes The New Republic to task for advocating a rise in the prices of foodstuffs as a remedy for depression. "If it be the case—and it is open to anybody to check it—that the total income of the people of the United States is insufficient to purchase more than a diminishing fraction of the total national production, then obviously matters are not bettered by diverting purchasing power from one set of producers to another set of producers. The remedy, we repeat, is not the redistribution of the existing and dwindling amount of purchasing power, but the creation and distribution of more and more of it."

This is a weighty objection, deserving careful consideration. Enthusiasts for the new relief measure speak of the stimulus which industry would receive if the farmers, selling their crops at higher prices, should come back into the market for industrial products. But what would be the net gain if industrial workers at the same time were compelled to restrict their purchases of industrial products because they had to pay more for food and clothing?

This is merely one expression of a theory which is frequently urged against other proposals for bettering our economic system. It applies equally well to any argument for redistribution of income. Many have declared the necessity for providing wage earners with a higher income at the expense of profits and invested capital—a position which was first stated in a rigorous form by Karl Marx. But conventional economists have always replied that there would be no net increase in the purchasing power of the community as a whole, and hence no greater demand for products, if the additional money given to workers were taken from receivers of profit and interest. Today many writers speak of the gigantic debt burden, which "absorbs" so great a share of the national income, as an incubus which must be reduced before industry can revive. But others point out that creditors can spend

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money as well as debtors, and that interest paid does not disappear from the stream of purchasing power but comes back into markets for goods and services.

According to this theory, while humanitarian considerations may dictate a change in the distribution of income, it could have no effect on the problem of depression or on the operation of our economic machinery. Those who assume that the theory is correct are likely to look, for a present remedy, to some means of expanding credit or inflating currency. Since the desideratum in depression is thought to be not redistribution, but expansion of purchasing power, the cure for all our economic diseases is supposed to be some means of controlling credit or changing the quantity of money in circulation. An enormous number of proposals rely solely on this sort of thing to stabilize our system—ranging from Mr. Hoover's idea that the object to be sought is increased borrowing, spending and investment by private business, through Irving Fisher's proposal for an elastic dollar and a flexible central banking policy, to Major Douglas's credit plan, which is espoused by The New English Weekly. Many of these proposals assume that it makes no difference who does the borrowing and spending, or for what purpose the credit is used, so long as the new credit or the new currency is created.

We cheerfully admit that no great good can come from any scheme unless it leads to a net expansion of purchasing power and hence to an increase of production and consumption. But we disagree radically with those who assume that a proper distribution of purchasing power and a proper relationship among prices is unimportant in achieving this end. On the contrary, we think that nothing is more essential.

The most acute students of this depression are continually pointing out the significance of the fact, not merely that prices have fallen, but that they have fallen with extreme inequality. This is true of prices, and it is also true of incomes. The inequality of the change tends to restrict activity fully as much as the downward direction itself. The chief advantage which might conceivably be gained either from inflation or from further deflation would be, neither a general increase nor a general decrease of all prices, but the establishment of a new relationship among them which would be stable enough to permit trade to revive. Once this relationship were established, sales and employment would increase and would of themselves call for the necessary credit and expand the total purchasing power.

The case of farm products is frequently cited to illustrate this point. A wheat grower receives for his wheat, say, one-third as much as he did three years ago. When he goes out to buy farm machinery or an automobile, he finds that they have fallen, say, only 10 or 20 percent. When he tries to pay the interest or amortization on his mortgage, he finds that it has not been lowered. His income, at one end of the price scale, has been reduced by two-thirds, but the things he has been in the habit of buying, or has contracted to pay for, have been subject to much smaller price reductions or none at all. Naturally, he cannot buy so much as before. Naturally, the industries which depend on his patronage suffer. They suffer, not primarily from lack of credit, but from lack of a market. And the lack of market springs directly from the existing lack of balance between the prices of what they sell and the prices of what the farmer sells.

The fact that the prices paid by the industrial worker for bread are lower because of the low price of wheat does not mean that the industrial worker really benefits by the farmer's loss, or that industry can be indifferent to it. Or, if we assume that bread prices are not reduced, but that the miller and baker are the sole gainers from the low wheat price, still their extra profit does not compensate in the markets for the farmer's loss. The crucial point is that the disturbance of price relationships has caused a net diminution of effective demand, of production and employment and, hence, of general purchasing power.

It is for this reason that transferring purchasing power to the farmer—even, if necessary, from the employed industrial worker—may be expected to benefit not merely the farmer, but, in the end, the industrial worker as well. The domestic-allotment plan is a crude device to help remedy one of the worst disparities among prices and incomes which is now observable. A general reduction of interest and principal on farm mortgages would be another such device, and we favor it for that reason. This does not mean that farm prices could be raised indefinitely to the advantage of everybody else. Nor does it mean that every possible transfer of purchasing power from one group or class to another would aid the situation. But this happens to be a case where common sense tells us that the disparity is too wide. And the proposed law, in setting as a goal the same relationship between crop prices and other prices which obtained before the War, is roughly choosing a relationship which is, within reason, better than the present one.

Any intelligent control of economic society as a whole implies an intelligent control of prices, incomes, investment and credit. And this means, not merely control of a general average of all prices, or of the total volume of incomes, or of the gross amount of investment, or of the aggregate of credit, but of the relationships and distributions within these main categories, and of the relationships of the categories to one another. It is this crucial realm of discussion that most of those who emphasize the importance of controlling money and credit overlook. Credit expansion can scarcely succeed without such a relationship among prices that new credit is called forth. Once credit expansion starts, it is almost certain to go too far unless a correct relationship among prices, wages and profits can be established during the revival.

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Child Labor Comes Back

SEVERAL weeks ago the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor issued a report on the quarter of a million homeless boys who, hopeless of ever finding work, are roaming through the country, finding food and shelter where they can. Now the Bureau has issued a new report describing the working conditions of those children who have been fortunate enough to find jobs. According to the statistics and the descriptions of the conditions under which these children are working, their plight seems hardly better than that of their homeless and vagrant brothers.

According to the reports, the mills and factories where children and women can be employed—the needle trades, the clothing and textile industries—are rapidly approaching a state which can only be paralleled by that existing during the earliest years of the industrial revolution. Throughout the country labor laws of every kind, and in particular child-labor laws, are being openly flouted. Parents, teachers and social workers, overeager to see anyone find work at whatever wages or at whatever hours, are frankly ignoring violations of the law. As a result the sweat shop, with all its old abuses of long hours, Sunday work, underpayment and unhealthy working conditions, is springing up everywhere, even in towns where formerly it has not been seen.

Detailed reports from authorities in various states substantiate the charge that children are being exploited in this country as they have not been for many years. In Connecticut the Commissioner of Labor reports that cases have been found where children were working in shops eighty or more hours a week. Employers punched time cards to show a legal number of hours, while the employees, including minors, worked overtime. "Child labor and fearfully low wages," the Commissioner writes, "characterize the sweat shops in the clothing industry operating in the state of Connecticut," and he goes on to state that the general working conditions found by factory inspectors are comparable to those existing fifty years ago. He also reports that the majority of children receiving working certificates "have found two-dollar and three-dollar-a-week jobs" in these sweat shops.

Conditions in Massachusetts, which has often been regarded as having excellent labor laws, seem to be little better. The Minimum Wage Commission reported last spring, when wages were much higher than they are now, that rates as low as ten and even five cents an hour were being paid to girl workers in Fall River, and that hundreds were earning less than five dollars a week. The Commission states that practically all the sweat shops have appeared since the depression and it points out that the authorities are powerless to suppress all the abuses which these shops nurture because their rulings are not mandatory.

In a recent survey of 150 clothing factories, made by Beatrice McConnell, director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Women and Children, it was found that at least one-half were employing fourteen and fifteen-year-old children. In one factory 53 percent of the total working force consisted of children under eighteen, while in some plants 25 percent were under sixteen. Miss McConnell reports that fifty-one hours was the usual working week, 44 percent of the children were receiving less than three dollars a week, and more than three-quarters were receiving less than five. The Children's Bureau reported that during the first six months of the year the median wage for a group of children under fifteen was less than five dollars a week in Scranton, and that in other Pennsylvania cities wages were about the same.

New York's record is hardly more encouraging. Frances Perkins, New York State Industrial Commissioner, reports a great increase in low-paid piece work. In a group of 125 children illegally employed it was found that the majority were receiving less than five dollars for a full working week and that many were receiving as little as thirty-five cents a day. In New York, violations of child-labor laws have been increasing at an alarming rate, there being 30 percent more in 1931 than in 1930. Miss Perkins also states that children are being given adults' jobs in ever increasing numbers, proving this by the fact that there has been a positive rise in the number of children injured while at work, though at the same time the total number of accidents among adult workers has been on the decline.

It is perhaps not necessary to go further into the detailed and harrowing reports from other agencies on the general resurgence of the sweat shop and the increasing exploitation of child labor. The facts which the Children's Bureau have collected are enough to make it plain that the breakdown of our economic system is beginning to show itself in its ugliest aspects. Under the lash of hard times and driven on by the relentless force of competition, our civilization is rapidly retreating toward that industrial anarchy which existed during the early part of the nineteenth century.

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On the Paradox of Plenty

WE HEAR much today about the paradox of plenty. How ridiculous, it is said, that millions should be in distress in a nation of such vast material resources; how criminally absurd that wheat should be burned while little children cry for food.

It is not necessarily either ridiculous or absurd unless we know clearly what kind of economic system we are talking about. Few of us do know clearly and the resulting confusion is colossal. It is my purpose to attack this confusion. If we mean a *functional* economy—such as Russia's or Denmark's—the paradox is ridiculous; more, it is unthinkable. An economy dedicated unreservedly to the adequate provisioning of the population cannot, by definition, permit such discrepancies. But, if we mean an acquisitive economy—such as the price-and-credit system of America or England, it is not ridiculous at all; it is natural, inevitable and to be expected. Indeed, there is no paradox whatsoever involved, except in a highly philosophical and detached sense.

Dire poverty in the midst of plenty is a permanent phenomenon in the system known as capitalism; it always has been and probably always will be so long as capitalism in its present form endures. Sometimes, to be sure, the suffering involved is more acute than at other times, depending primarily on the curve of the business cycle, but it is always present. Never were there fewer than two millions of unemployed in the late New Era, while conditions in textile towns, soft-coal fields and many agricultural areas pursued their more or less normal course of malnutrition, destitution and degradation. That is the price we pay—right cheerily on the part of most of us—for the blessings of self-help, sturdy individualism and technical "progress." We should long since have become inured to it sufficiently to avoid flinging accusations of "paradox" around when the cycle dips and somewhat magnifies typical phenomena. In 1920, I walked through a reeking, poverty-stricken Negro slum in Washington, D. C., and an hour later saw a carload of fine watermelons bobbing green in the Potomac's ocher water. They had been dumped from the docks to maintain local prices; a perfectly legal and eminently businesslike procedure.

In an acquisitive economy, consistent regard for the human equation is a luxury which no successful business man can indefinitely permit himself. The reward of benevolence is normally bankruptcy. Human beings are important only as consumers—profitable consumers—and as hands. Machines can do much, but they cannot, as yet, do everything, and hands are necessary. The fact that the cost of a pair of hands is less, in the long run, if the body behind the hands is safeguarded from accident and excessive fatigue, has nothing to do with benevolence, or justice, but only with cost accounting. We speak here not of men but of systems. Fortunately for humanity, most business men are kindlier than the system in whose coils they writhe.

An acquisitive economy is concerned with price in terms of money—first, last and all the time; even as a functional economy is concerned with supplying human wants—first, last and all the time. If, in an acquisitive economy, a high depreciation rate in human flesh and blood pays, it will be introduced forthwith—unless a meddling state interferes—precisely as a machine with a high depreciation rate will be ordered if it promises increased profit in terms of price. If low retail prices and faster turnover result in a greater yield on invested capital than a policy of high prices and businesslike sabotage, it will be installed. The fact that the former policy helps the wayfaring man more than the latter is pleasant but irrelevant.

All this does not mean that an acquisitive economy does not supply a certain measure of human wants. Without human wants there would be no sales; without sales there would be no profits; without private profits there would be no acquisitive system. But the system, it must never be forgotten, is not interested in human wants as such—and no better illustration is needed than the way it deliberately modifies and perverts wants by advertising—it is interested only in the gain in terms of money to be made from them. The factor of supply comes in solely as a by-product. In my "Tragedy of Waste" I made bold to prove, with a good deal of statistical support, that in 1924 or thereabouts the same economic plant, functionally organized, could have thrown off something on the order of twice the volume of sound consumer goods; the standard of living of the American people could have been doubled. It is of course conceivable that a greater tonnage per family *might* be distributed in the left-handed manner of acquisitiveness—stimulated by profit, rather than by a more sober functional economy. Along in 1928 it looked, superficially, as if this might happen. The New Era fraternity announced it with prayer and feasting, quite unmindful of the fact that the prosperity of 1928 was built on a preposterous curve of credit inflation. Today it looks as if it could never happen. Hour by hour Russia, in terms of the distribution of the essentials and comforts of life, is catching up and preparing to draw ahead of us. By 1937, we may have fired up the old credit boiler once more, and again it may look as though tonnage distribution was on the acquisitive side. If it does happen permanently, I shall be gravely surprised. It will con-

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note a situation where more is accomplished by concentrating on something else than by attending to the main thing. Russia concentrates day and night on building an industrial plant intended to furnish food, shelter, clothing and comforts for her people. I do not see how we can outdistance her in the long run; how we can obtain more of the good things of life by encouraging business men and bankers to furnish them as the by-product of a ruthless speculative game.

An acquisitive economy is by definition a succession of chills and fevers, slumps and booms. The principle of acquiring, ably seconded by compound interest, prevents an adequate distribution of purchasing power to the mass of the people and fosters oversavings, credit inflation and excessive investment on the part of a minority. When the limit of credit inflation is reached—as it was in 1929—it is no longer possible to borrow money to keep huge levies of workmen employed on the construction of capital goods. They are summarily discharged, and the loss of their purchasing power reacts on the consumers'-goods sector. We go into the tailspin of deflation, marked by almost complete cessation of capital-goods production and a reduction of consumers'-goods production to the bare minimum of subsistence for a large fraction of the population.

Fixed charges in the form of interest, rents, leases, contractual obligations, loom higher and blacker as prices fall and production and business activity dwindle. Finally they become insupportable and are repudiated right and left through bankruptcies, defaults and "reorganizations." The investor and creditor class is cleaned out—at least to the point where their claims become a supportable burden on economic activity.

Then the whole process begins all over again with a new crop of speculators and investors. Profits are made on the upswing, purchasing power is restricted as heretofore, savings pile up, new ventures are promoted, workers are called by the millions into the capital-goods sector, credit is expanded, a New Era is announced. Then crash! . . . Such is the inevitable rhythm of an acquisitive economy; a rhythm meaningless and unknown in a functional economy. It is difficult to see how we can count on any sustained output of worthwhile goods from this loop-the-loop.

It is true that some of the objectives of functionalism are achieved, for a time at least, by the operations of the price system. In the last decade we have seen the astounding doctrine of the economy of high wages not only preached but actually experimented with. We have seen shorter working hours, rest periods, safety campaigns, sanitary precautions. Was this because the priests of the price system had suddenly gone functional? Nonsense. It was because their efficiency engineers had proved to them that these measures paid in dollars. Along, however, came a smiling band of social workers, uplifters and near-sighted well wishers, who did not hesitate to announce that Industry had washed in the Jordan and been born again. Thereby they confused a functional with an acquisitive economy, even as the paradox protesters confuse it. Where, pray, is most of this welfare work today? Sunk, with the price of wheat, tin plate, raw cotton and front footage. The majestic processes of deflation have ruined that neat budget of progress almost beyond repair. The social workers counted functional chickens in a price-system incubator. Such incubators are built to hatch dollars, not chickens.

Why is an intelligent man nauseated by the word "Service"? Because of the profound hypocrisy implicit therein. The business man seeks to give himself a functional status with the term, purporting that his pleasure and duty is to serve the public. Stuff and nonsense. His pleasure and duty is to add to his bank balance. If he deviates from this duty for any considerable span of time, he will land in a court of insolvency. He cannot, of course, affront his customers if he wants to make sales, but the notion of a life dedicated primarily to their service is thoroughly false to the facts which must of necessity govern his comfort.

President Hoover, stung by the program of the economic planners, announced a business man's Twenty Year Plan for America. Millions of new homes fitted with the shiniest of new gadgets. Thus he leaped out of a business system into a functional system. The sad facts are that, granted the continuation of his system on normal, "sound" financial lines, the new homes may be built, right enough, but the depression of 1941 will force owners, who cannot meet fixed charges thereon, into the street, as heretofore. Mr. Hoover might say with some show of reason that twenty years from now the national wealth will be 500 billions, or a trillion, or any other vast sum. An acquisitive economy delights in piling up mathematical ciphers. But he cannot logically say that a happy population will be enjoying millions of new homes. Mortgages and a happy population are not compatible.

Indeed the great bulk of our after-dinner oratory, of our polite essays on economics, of our articles in the financial and business press, are cursed with this confusion. What bright days, what happy homes, what a wonderful world, as we march confidently forward on the well tried path of tested institutions! The truth is that on this path we shall build a lot of huge factories, enormously expand the service and luxury trades, build up a shining edifice of inflated credit, fasten the chains of compound interest about every economic activity, and presently plunge down a steep place into the sea. . . . Then wade ashore, dripping and naked, and do it all over again. The learned economists, furthermore, tell us that the place is getting steeper.

I have assumed all along that you have read Tawney and know what a functional economy is. Russia has one built on a state-socialism basis; Denmark has a less complete one built on a consumers' and producers' coöperative basis; every

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decent housewife has one in her own home; she provides for her family to the best of her knowledge and ability, neither bargaining with Johnnie for the price he will pay for sitting at the table, nor throwing Frankie out on the street to look for scraps when there is plenty of food in the ice box. Functionalism is not necessarily socialism, bolshevism, consumers' coöperation or primitive village communism. It is any sustained and deliberate method for the direct utilization of an economic system to provide sufficient human essentials and comforts with a minimum of lag, leak and friction. Our acquisitive society, while interpenetrated with functionalism here and there, is basically at right angles to it. To expect functional attributes or behavior from it is naïve. Worse, it confounds the issues.

Let us keep the record and our thinking clear on this cardinal distinction, and hear no more of paradoxes. . . . At least not until we have elected to change the system. STUART CHASE.

Hull-House in 1932: I

THE LANDSCAPE turns gray: the snowfields gray like newspaper, the sky gray like pasteboard—then darkness; just a crack of gray, distinct as a break in an old boiler, that separates darkening clouds—a black fortress with one smokestack; the Northern Indiana Public Utility Company—darkness with light at long intervals—a sudden street with lighted stores and street cars—then darkness again: the dim front of a frame house, dim signboards—a red electric globe on a barber's pole—bridges in the blackness, a shore?—black factories—long streets with rows of lights that stretch away into darkness—a large blunt tower embroidered in coarse beadwork of red, green and gold lights—then the endless succession of cars speeding along the dark lake front with the lights at shorter intervals now—then a thing like a red-hot electric toaster as big as an office building, which turns out to be one of the features of next summer's World's Fair.

But mostly black midland darkness. Chicago is one of the darkest of great cities. In the morning the winter sun does not seem to give any light: it leaves the streets dull. It is more like a forge which has just been started up, is just beginning to burn red in an atmosphere darkened with coal-fumes. All the world seems made of gray fog—gray fog and white smoke—the great square white and gray buildings seem to have been pressed out of them. The smooth asphalt road along the lake-side seems solidified polished smoke: the lake shows a strange stagnant pearl just becoming faintly luminous and liquid, opaque like all the rest but more sensitive than asphalt and stone. The Merchandise Mart—the *biggest* building in the world, as the Empire State Building is the *highest*—is no tower, in the fog, but a mountain, to brood upon whose cubic content is to be astounded, desolated, stunned. The Chicago River, dull green, itself a work of engineering, runs backward along its original course, buckled with black iron bridges, which unclose, one after the other, in two short fragments as a tug drags car-barges under them, like the peristaltic movement of the stomach pushing a stiff piece of food along. The sun half-reveals these scenes for a time, but its energies are brief. Afternoon has scarcely established itself as an identifiable phenomenon when light succumbs to dullness and the day lapses back into dark. The buildings seem banks of soft darkness packed and carved out of mounds of swamp-mud, rubber-stamped here and there with red neon signs. Many of the streets, aside from the main thoroughfares, have scant lighting or none; and even those that are adequately lighted lose themselves in blurred vistas of coal-smoke.

In that dull air, among those low long streets—the deadened civilization of industry where people are kept just enough alive to see that the machinery is running—the almost neutral red brick walls of Hull-House have themselves an industrial plainness. The old big square high-windowed mansion of early family grandeur, embedded in the dormitories, eating halls, gymnasiums, nurseries and laundries that today pack a city block, has been chastened as well as expanded: it has something both of the monastery and the factory. The high Victorian rooms that open into one another through enormous arched and corniced doorways, though they have old mahogany sofas and tables and faded Turkish rugs, are scantly and serviceably furnished. The white woodwork and even the marble fireplace have been painted a sort of neutral dark green so that the use of the house may not soil them. In the little polygon room, where one imagines hanging pots of ferns and an elegant writing-desk, are a typewriter and a set of colored charts showing the shift of nationalities around Hull-House.

Yet there are a fragment of a Greek frieze and copies of Italian pictures and statues: the pre-Raphaelite cult of art. Behind the glass doors of bookcases are old sets of Ruskin and Augustus Hare's "Walks in Rome"; and the hallway is lined with photographs of residents and friends of the house. On the walls of the polygon room hang the patron saints and heroes: Kropotkin and Catherine Breshkovsky, Arnold Toynbee and Jacob Riis—and Jane Addams's father; and over the desk by the front door is Jane Addams herself, slender

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and winning, in the big-sleeved high-collared costume of the nineties, almost like an illustration for some serial by Mrs. Burton Harrison or Howells in the old Century Magazine.

A little girl with curvature of the spine, whose mother had died when she was a baby, she abjectly admired her father, a man of consequence in frontier Illinois, a friend of Lincoln and a member of the state legislature, who had a flour mill and a lumber mill on his place. Whenever there were strangers at Sunday school, she would try to walk out with her uncle so that her father should not be disgraced by people's knowing that such a fine man had a daughter with a crooked spine. When he took her one day to a mill which was surrounded by horrid little houses and explained to her, in answer to her questions, that the reason people lived in such horrid houses was that they couldn't afford anything better, she declared that when she grew up she should herself continue to live in a big house, but that it should stand among the houses of poor people.

At college in the late seventies, she belonged to a group of girls who vowed before they parted for vacation that each would have read the whole of Gibbon before they met again in the fall. In a Greek oration she delivered, Bellerophon figured as the Idealism which alone could slay the Chimera of Social Evils, and for her graduation essay she chose Cassandra, doomed "always to be in the right and always disbelieved and rejected." She heard rumors of the doctrines of Darwin and borrowed scientific books from a brother-in-law who had studied medicine in Germany; and she resisted with invincible stubbornness the pressure brought to bear by her teachers to make her go into the missionary field. The year she graduated from college, she inherited part of her father's estate and gave the college a thousand dollars to spend on a scientific library.

She herself went to medical school; but her spinal trouble got worse and she had to stop. She spent six months strapped to a bed. This gave her lots of time for reading, with no necessity for feeling that she ought to be doing anything else, and she was very glad to have it; but when she was able to get about again, she felt dreadfully exhausted and depressed. She tried Europe; but she went out one day for a bus-ride in the London East End. As she looked down on the misery and squalor, she remembered De Quincey's "Vision of Sudden Death": how, when confronted by a pair of lovers about to be run over by the mail-coach in which he was traveling, he had found himself powerless to warn them till he had remembered the exact lines in the "Iliad" which describe the shout of Achilles; and she was suddenly filled with disgust for the artificial middle-class culture upon which she had been trying to nourish herself and which had equipped her to meet this horror with nothing but a wretched literary allusion, itself recalling another culture-addict as far outside life as herself.

What was the good of enjoying German operas and the pictures in Italian galleries? Between two trips to Europe, she visited a Western farm on which she held a mortgage—it was one of the investments which made her traveling possible. She found a woman and her children starved by the drought and trying to raise money on a promissory note for which they were offering a penful of pigs as collateral. The pigs were starved, too, and horrible: they were all crowded together and hunched up, eating one of their own number.

She gave the mortgages up and went back to Europe again. There she saw striking match girls with phossy jaw. She decided to return to Chicago and to found a settlement-house—there had never yet been one in America. The "subjective necessity" for settlement work she analyzed as follows: "first, the desire to interpret democracy in social terms; secondly, the impulse beating at the very source of our lives, urging us to aid in the race progress; and, thirdly, the Christian movement toward humanitarianism." But she did not exclude "the desire for a new form of social success due to the nicety of imagination, which refuses worldly pleasures unmixed with the joys of self-sacrifice" and "a love of approbation so vast that it is not content with the treble clapping of delicate hands, but wishes also to hear the bass notes from toughened palms." Her father had impressed upon her, as a girl, that mental integrity, the unwillingness to make pretenses which one knew inside one did not live up to, was practically the whole of morality.

In South Halsted Street, where there were Italians, Germans, Russians and Jews, she tried to help relieve their difficulties: to teach the emigrants English and to give the young generation some idea of the European tradition from which they had been cut off. But this led to looking into their living conditions; and the problems of their living conditions led to the industrial system. When it was a question of children of four spending their whole day indoors pulling out basting threads or pasting labels on boxes, she found herself under the obligation of trying to engineer labor legislation; and of disapproving of competition in business. One of the residents at Hull-House was appointed factory inspector.

At the time of the Pullman strike in 1894, she was appalled to see Chicago split up into two fiercely antagonistic camps. She had known Mr. Pullman personally and had been impressed by his benevolent intentions in building a model town for his employees: Hull-House tried to maintain relations with both sides; but by the time the strike was over, she found out that she and Mr. Pullman were on different sides and that he was highly indignant with her.

The socialists and other radicals tried to convince her that she ought to be one of them; but though she carefully looked up socialism, she re-

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sisted them as she had resisted the teachers who had tried to talk her into missionary work at college. She could not bind herself to parties and principles: what she did had to be done independently on a basis of day-by-day experience. And she had still sufficiently vivid an impression of the classless democracy of the Western frontier so that it was difficult for her to imagine a general class conflict in America.

Yet the winter after the World's Fair Chicago was full of people left stranded with no work; and she was assailed by a new sense of shame at being comfortable in the midst of misery. The activities of Hull-House began to seem to her futile; its philanthropy merely a specious way of reconciling one's conscience to the social injustice from which one profited. She remembered that the effect on Tolstoy of a similar period of suffering in Moscow had been to make him degrade his own standard of living to that of the poor themselves. She had another serious illness, and when she had recovered decided to go to Russia and discuss the problem with Tolstoy himself.

She found him working in the hayfields with the peasants and eating their black bread and porridge, while the Countess with her children and their governess had a regular upper-class dinner. He pulled out one of Miss Addams's big sleeves and said that there was enough material in it to make a frock for a little girl; and he asked whether she did not find "such a dress" a "barrier to the people." She tried to explain that, as big sleeves were the fashion, the working girls in Chicago were wearing even bigger ones than hers, and that you couldn't dress like a peasant on South Halsted Street as the peasants there wore middle-class clothes. But she was abashed when he asked her who "fed" her and how she got her "shelter" and she had to tell him that her money came from a farm a hundred miles out of Chicago. "So you are an absentee landlord?" he said scathingly. "Do you think you will help the people more by adding yourself to the crowded city than you would by tilling your own soil?"

She went away feeling humbled, and before she could allow herself to enjoy Wagner's "Ring" at Bayreuth, she resolved that when she got back to Hull-House, she would spend two hours every day in the bakery. But when she was actually there and found the piles of correspondence and people waiting to see her, she decided that this and not baking was her work, and forgot her Tolstoyan scruples.

Her efforts for labor legislation embittered the manufacturers against her; her attempts to get garbage and dead animals in the neighborhood of South Halsted Street removed embroiled her with the political machine; garbage-collecting was a racket, and the rackets seemed to go right on up. She was astonished to find that opposition to re-election of a corrupt alderman roused both pulpit and press against her. When Czolgosz assassinated McKinley, the editor of an anarchist paper was arrested and held incommunicado, not allowed to see even a lawyer. She protested and found that Hull-House was denounced as a hotbed of anarchy. When the agents of the Tsar succeeded in making Gorky a pariah in America by circulating the rumor that he and his wife were not married, she asked a Chicago paper to print an article in his defense and found that she was accused of immorality by interests that wanted to get her off the school board.

At last when in 1900 she went to see the Passion Play at Oberammergau, it struck her for the first time that the real enemy of Jesus was the money power: the young agitator had antagonized the merchants by interfering with their trade in the temple, and hence the Pharisees, whose racket depended on the temple, too; Church and State had stood solid with them; and the money power had bribed Judas to betray him.

When she advocated peace during the War, she found that President Wilson bowed her out and that she was presently being trailed by detectives. And then, after the War, people were more intolerant than ever.

Hull-House had always stood for tolerance: all the parties and the faiths had found asylum there and lived pretty harmoniously together. And it still stands planted with proud irrelevance in the midst of those dark streets, where its residents sometimes get beaten and robbed, only a few blocks from a corner made famous by a succession of gangster murders. With its solid walls, its enclosed stair-cased courts, its independent power plant, it stands like a medieval chateau protected by its moat and portcullis.

Inside it there is peace and a sort of sanctity. Jane Addams at seventy-two still dominates her big house among the little ones—though she is supposed to have been forbidden by the doctors to spend more than four hours there a day—with her singular combination of the authority of a great lady and the humility of a saint. In the large refectorylike dining-room with its copper and brass and bare brick, the quick glances of the "seeing eye" which fascinated young women in the nineties and excited them to go in for settlement work—that glance at once penetrating and shy—still lights its responses around her table. Through her vitality Hull-House still lives: the expression both of pride and humility—the pride of the imagination and moral sense for which the little worlds of social groups—and of intellectual groups as well—are too small; the humility of one who, seeing so far, sees beyond herself, too, and feels herself lost amid the same uncertainties, thwarted by the same cross-purposes, as the rest.

EDMUND WILSON.

This is the first of three articles on Chicago, of which the second will appear next week.—THE EDITORS.

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Main Street Ten Years After

THE CASUAL visitor viewing Melrose for the first time in four years would observe few changes. There are the current phenomena of the depression, empty stores, For Rent signs, smokeless factories, closing-out sales. But on a fine summer evening, an endless procession of cars, and many of them are new, passes out along Washington Boulevard to the Spring Valley Highway. And on any Saturday afternoon, the group waiting to drive off from the first tee at the country club is apparently as large as ever, as jovial, as well fed, as carefree. There is, however, a startling disparity between this familiar surface and what is really happening as a result of the depression.

This town of nineteen thousand, located in a rich farming community, might be anywhere in the Middle West, Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois. Along with the other Main Streets, it had its boom, a whole series of booms. There was the War, with fat contracts for the steel-castings company and the wire-cloth factory. It was in 1924 that Main Street was made Main Avenue, paved drives were put through Sunset Park, the new half-million-dollar high school was finished and the Kiwanis public golf links and swimming pool were opened. Then came the stock-market boom.

The majority in Melrose were not lured away from rock-ribbed safety—savings banks and real-estate bonds. The collapse of the banks and the bonds the bankers sold was the immediate cause of the deflation in Melrose. School teachers, insurance salesmen, small wage earners, dentists, retired farmers, saw life savings disappear, security vanish. An entire generation, with striking exceptions, has been stripped; and not by some remote force a thousand miles away but, so the reasoning is, by the man who used to live in the big house on the corner of South Main Avenue and Washington Boulevard.

What is surprising is the passive resignation with which the blow has been accepted; this awful pretense that seeks to conceal the mortal wound, to carry on as though it were still the best possible of all worlds. Before the depression, one of the principal pleasures was to discover how much one's neighbor was spending; now the game is to find out how much he has lost and how he is standing his losses. This curiosity is almost a form of psychopathology; sympathy is all too often an ill concealed form of triumph, a kind of "Thank God, someone is worse off than we are."

The First National Bank of Melrose was the first to go. There was no warning; in the middle of the banking day the doors were closed by the examiners. It was one of the oldest banks in the state, regarded as a branch of the United States Treasury. Within two or three hours everyone knew of the disaster. Depositors, stunned and disbelieving, gathered in small groups to read the notice on the door. There were wild rumors. It was said that Mr. Johnson, the new president, had fled to Canada with his blonde secretary. Someone brought a report that the closing was only temporary, someone else spread word that there would be nothing left for the depositors. The other three banks, forewarned, withstood heavy runs.

There was little public lamentation. The most shocking example was old Mrs. Gearman. She beat with her fists upon the closed plate-glass doors and screamed and sobbed without restraint. She had in a savings account the $2,000 from her husband's insurance and $963 she had saved over a period of twenty-five years from making rag rugs. Nothing was left but charity. For a week neighbors did not see her. A policeman found her sitting in the middle of the kitchen of her small, scrubbed house. They took her to the insane asylum a few days afterward.

Others were more successful in concealing the tragic extent of their losses. For fifty-two years Amy Blanshard taught the fourth grade. Her sister kept house for her. They lived in the upper half of the old Blanshard home, renting the lower half. Amy had more than $11,000 in a savings account in the First National Bank. On a salary which was never more than a thousand dollars a year, it is plain what heroic economies this must have required. As a direct result of the closing, twelve families, most of them elderly couples, were forced onto the county. School children had on deposit about $25,000 in small accounts; these were repaid in full before any other claims "to retain the faith of the youngest generation in our banks."

There were charges and counter-charges. It was said that all the directors withdrew their deposits before the bank failed and that more important business men were warned, too. In the first bitter reaction there was talk of criminal prosecution against one director, Davis, who, according to rumor, succeeded in tapping the bank before it collapsed, for a sum greater than the amount of his stock. There was a public meeting in the armory which ended on a note of reassurance from President Johnson. There would be sufficient assets to cover virtually the entire amount on deposit at the time of the bank's closing. Gradually the whispered rumors were forgotten.

"Do you see any of the bankers themselves ruined?" Jeffery Fagan demands, with fire in his

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eye. (He dropped $17,000.) "They're still riding around in their big cars. I can remember the day when it was the banker that went to the poorhouse and the depositors got their money. It takes about as much brains and honesty to run a bank now as it used to take to run a peanut stand." This last is a concise expression of opinion in Melrose. The spectacle of the Davises whizzing about in their expensive car is not one to cheer the losers. Reason has no part in this reaction; the fact that the capitalization of the bank was absurdly low and Davis' share of the stock only a small percentage of the total of deposits is not considered. What no one can forget is that only 31 percent of the deposits were paid after a delay of eight months. The prospect for a further dividend is slight.

The collapse of the Merchants' Bank and Trust Company was less spectacular. It had long been weak, and when a plan to merge it with the Melrose National Bank failed, it wilted away. There were other calamities to take public attention. One was the failure of the Ryder Furniture and Carpet Company. Like the First National Bank, it had been regarded as a Gibraltar of stability. Edward Ryder represented the third generation in the business; the Ryder store occupied one of the four principal corners at Main and Washington. After the grand closing-out sale, people were not slow to discover that the Ryders had nothing left. The bank got the property, tore down the old building and put up a new one that is occupied by a chain clothing store.

The Ryders themselves offered a more complex problem which no one undertook to solve. The envious said they had long lived beyond their means and it served them right. Mrs. Ryder sold Chevrolets until she exhausted the roster of her friends. The town watched them slip from one subterfuge to another, recalling with little charity the days when the Ryders went on Mediterranean cruises and Bermudan holidays. They lost their home on South Main Avenue. For a time, an aged aunt sent money for apartment rent. When this failed, the Ryders took refuge in a friend's third floor. There were stories. People said that while she ate at the Busy Bee Cafe, he waited outside in the car and she brought out what she could in a paper napkin; that for three days he lived on peanuts from a penny slot machine. He grows thinner and grayer; she tries to maintain the surface pretense.

Perhaps the most appalling blow of all was reserved for early in 1932. R. William McSwirtle was in more ways than one the town's leading citizen. The Melrose National Bank was long known as McSwirtle's bank. He was the personification of the small-town Middle Western banker, gray, respectable, shiny, with cold, fish-colored eyes concealed behind pince-nez, and a pompous smile. The very sight of this pious man was for a long time enough to reassure depositors. He was the chief angel of the Episcopal Church. Not a young boy in the past thirty years has escaped hearing R. William's famous lecture, "Banks and the Churches."

But there were rumors about his bank all through the fall and winter of 1931. The women of the town drew most assurance from the fact that the McSwirtle household was maintained on the same scale as before. R. William certainly tried. He even fought off another threatening run. But the end was close at hand. Early in March of this year The Melrose Advocate announced he had resigned as president of the bank, because of ill health, but would continue in an advisory capacity. Two days later the bank failed and R. William left for parts unknown.

It developed that he had looted the bank of some $300,000. In addition he had extracted about $100,000 from various personal accounts. He had managed the finances of a number of persons of comparatively large income: Dr. Maxwell, the leading surgeon; a half-dozen of the more prosperous professors at Cremona College; old Mrs. Tompkins. Shock followed upon shock until it seemed that God himself had fallen from his throne. Mrs. McSwirtle, Dorothy and young Ted had signed for R. William a number of mysterious papers which proved to be promissory notes. The late neo-Georgian home on South Main Avenue, Dorothy's undyed sealskin coat, the new Packard convertible coupe, everything melted away and the McSwirtles sought shelter with relatives in Decatur.

It is impossible to convey the blasting effect this had upon Melrose. The City National, the only remaining bank, promptly called a thirty-day moratorium on deposits above $100 and convinced the town that, as is true today, it would be possible to pay off every depositor in full in cash. "But," the president added grimly, "we wouldn't have any bank left." Two of the directors of this bank died of nervous strain.

For the first time it is possible to see poverty in Melrose so considerable and conspicuous as to force itself upon the attention beyond the polite limits of what the Benevolent Society regards as the picturesque. Last winter children shivered in sleazy cotton cover-alls, their pinched faces showing unmistakable effects of malnutrition. Here, too, there is the same pitiful subterfuge. There were five soup kitchens, but in most instances adults were too proud to go to these public troughs. They sent their children for the noonday ration of soup and bread. Each day one saw a procession of small stragglers, tin syrup pails in each hand. The majority of these people had never experienced charity before.

Unemployment relief has been uncertain. Men who had destitute families were given small garden tracts on the edge of the city and five dollars a

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week for a family. In the winter they shoveled snow, painted street signs, cleaned the highways, for the same amount. But twice the fund was exhausted and the interval between was almost long enough to permit starvation. The last "drive" brought little more than half the minimum amount required. There is still wealth in Melrose, but the rich are groaning over their own losses, in no mood to make voluntary contributions. During the winter when the relief fund ran out the second time, the unemployed had a parade. Between five and six hundred men marched up Main Avenue and along Washington Boulevard, silent, shambling, a placard at the fore that said, "We, the unemployed, ask your help."

"It was enough to wring your heart, just wring your heart," says Mrs. Kinsey. Before the depression Mrs. Kinsey, who is chief torch-bearer to the town, was worth a conservative four million. That is now less than two million and the good woman is panic-stricken. In this time of crisis, as head of the local D.A.R., she has taken upon her shoulders the task of saving Melrose from Communism. Her most formidable foe to date has been the Methodist minister, who has dropped a hint or two that perhaps the Russians might be better off today than many people in Melrose.

Bootlegging is the one business that retains all outward signs of former prosperity. Jim Parello, head of the local alcohol ring, has just built a new house. His car is as big and as new and as shiny as ever. Bootlegging has been the resort of some of Melrose's older families. It is the commonest report in the town: "Yes, so-and-so has taken to bootlegging, you know."

Even to maintain a pretense of the old standard has become a desperate kind of endurance contest for many. A number have succumbed; they have given up, withdrawing from the social and economic life of the town in a kind of living death, pariahs, outcasts, disregarded in even the humblest councils. Their condition is more fortunate than that of those who still struggle. It is, in a sense, as though the whole town were entrenched behind a false front. How much longer they will be able to hold out is a question that no one dares to ask—openly. There is now little consolation in knowing that Chestnut Springs, with all its banks and all its furniture factories closed, is in a worse condition. With the majority, the battle is too grim for such easy consolations. There is small solace in the plight of the Fergusons next door; their condition is prophetic. What will happen next spring Melrose does not venture to guess; next month is too close at hand.

MARQUIS W. CHILDS.

Nebraska Farmers in Action

THE OPEN warfare which is sweeping rapidly across the agrarian front throughout the country has had its most interesting development during recent months in the state of Nebraska. Here the more insurgent farmers have broken away from the official Farmers' Holiday Association, and are now carrying out a program of direct action. This rebel group now numbers six thousand members in the state as against the two thousand adherents of the parent organization. Through a hundred Committees of Action, or district nuclei, the group is making open and highly organized resistance to all attempts at foreclosures, repossessions and farm confiscations.

The first display of mass action by the insurgent group occurred as a protest against the seizure of two trucks whose owners, badly hit by the low farm prices, had been unable to meet their payments. Without bothering about the formality of a sheriff, the sales company had driven off the trucks and parked them in the company's sheds at Newman Grove. The loss of the trucks was naturally a serious matter for the farmers, who would be unable to support themselves without machines to do their trucking.

The farmers in the district talked the incident over and decided that it was a "double-geared crime." The Nebraska Holiday Association (the rebel group) got busy, and the following day seventy-five determined farmers assembled, organized themselves into a body which they called "The Red Army" and marched over to the company offices, where they wheeled the two trucks out of the sheds and turned them over to the farmers. The commander of the "Army" turned to his men and, as a parting insult to the law, asked whether there was anything else they wanted in the shed. The next day, law-abiding citizens of the town sent a committee to the sheriff protesting against his inactivity in the matter. "I am absolutely powerless," he replied, "in the face of such organized outlawry."

Another incident was the Avery sale near Petersburg. For the last fifty years, old Avery had worked as a hired hand and tenant farmer for a local banker. Last year he died, and the banker, realizing that he might have difficulty in collecting the four-hundred-dollar chattel mortgage which apparently represented the fruits of old Avery's half-century of toil, induced Avery's two sons to sign a new mortgage. He then foreclosed. This meant taking away all the boys' livestock and farm machinery. The Holiday Association heard about the sale, marched to it three thousand strong and

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presented its demands: the costs of the sale, amounting to fifty dollars, were to be at the expense of the banker and the note was to be reduced considerably. The banker made a suave speech to the effect that he had had no intention "of setting these boys and their dependents on the road," but had "ordered the sale merely for the purpose of probating the property of the late Mr. Avery." This was too much for the crowd and the Committee determined to hold the sale then and there. It was decided that nobody wanted the goods except the two Avery boys, and that "any other bidders will have to deal with the crowd." The sale was held at bargain prices, cows bringing twenty-five cents and three pieces of farm machinery going for a nickel each. The banker obtained $7.10 for his note.

Later there was a foreclosure against the old Williamson couple near Platte Center. The banker had heard of the Holiday Association and took precautions. He drove all the chattels into town, and announced the sale for ten in the morning in the belief that the Committee of Action could not mobilize the farmers in sufficient strength at that hour. The Committee went to the Williamson farm. They found the old couple completely despondent and destitute; not only their cattle and machinery, but their entire crop of grain had been taken away. They then called on the banker, and told him he was "an unconscionable barbarian." The latter asked the Committee leader what he "suggested." "Mr. Banker, we do not suggest, we *demand*." The Committee of Action thus voiced the maturity and strength of the organized farming class. It presented two alternatives. Either the renewal of the note for at least a year, the immediate return of all the chattels to the Williamsons, plus the payment of all the costs of the sale and the repair or replacement of any property lost or damaged, or a forced sale, four thousand farmers coming into town on Wednesday and seeing that the $400 note was wiped out for $1.98.

As Mid-Western farmers generally mean what they say, the banker agreed to every demand. The sequel is interesting. While the cattle were in town, seven pigs died of cholera. The banker had to replace these and vaccinate the rest of the herd. He had to send a carpenter to repair the Williamsons' crib. The result of his attempted chattel sale was a bill of costs and damages which almost equaled his note.

The $1.98 sale is the last recourse of the farmers. It is applied when the banker remains obdurate and refuses to accept the Committee's terms.

There is also the story of a farmer in Holt County by the name of Clasey. His goods were advertised for sale to cover a paltry one-hundred-and-thirty-five-dollar note. Neighbors told him to go to the Holiday Association, but he was slow to make up his mind. The day before the sale Clasey became frantic, realized that nothing would stop his being put on the road and, cranking up his Ford, drove south a hundred miles to find some members of "this here Holiday bunch." The Antelope County Holiday Association sent one of its officers back to Clasey's precinct. That night he gathered enough farmers for a meeting, and told them they couldn't let a neighbor be sold out. The morning of the sale, the newly formed Committee of Action got into cars and drove over the countryside, calling farmers from their cornfields, getting them to unhitch their teams and move on to the Clasey farm. They arrived, reënforced by others who had driven the hundred miles from the Antelope County Holiday Association, and forced the bank officials to renew the note.

These Committees of Action have spread like wildfire. There are about a hundred of them in east-central Nebraska, and on the average two or three are being formed each night. They are elected by the farmers in a precinct, and directed usually by the poorer farmers, who face the threat of foreclosure and repossession more immediately and hence will struggle more actively against it. The Committee of Action becomes a trouble center. Farmers drive up from the neighboring town to show their Committee a threatening letter from a banker or insurance company. The Committee sees what can be done about it. The farmers are learning to stand together. Some years ago they would have regarded a foreclosure as an index of bad farming and felt little sympathy. Today they are seeing these things as caused by the workings of a system outside their individual control, and are realizing the need for acting collectively. They have built in these Committees of Action a form of organization closely resembling the Soviets of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

As the rebel Farmers' Holiday movement grows in strength—and it now embraces all but eight Nebraska counties—the business class and the Catholic Church are joining in a concerted move against it. Lecturers on Russia are covering Nebraska with bloody tales about the liquidation of the *kulak*. In Keya Paha County, three organizers of the Holiday Association were driven out by a mob of business men and county officials. The situation has not yet reached the point of open terror. As the militancy and strength of the Holiday Association grows, it may.

As for ideologies—in Nebraska actions are preceding words. But the farmers are beginning to think. On the march down to Washington, they saw bread lines, and thin gruel passed out to children when wheat was rotting on their farms. "What's wrong," one of them said to me, "is those people that are standing between the farmer and the worker. We'll have to jerk them out. Then the important people will get closer together."

"But that's Communism," I replied.

"Communism hell, that's necessity."

Newman Grove, Nebr. LIEF DAHL.

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Washington Notes

The Barren Session—Rough Sledding Ahead for Frank—Warm Springs—Inflation in the Offing—A New Brains Trust

ONE THING for which we should be devoutly thankful is that, with the ratification of the Norris lame-duck amendment apparently assured before the year is out, it will be impossible ever again to have such a session of Congress as this. The spectacle of the rejected President making his futile recommendations to a Congress dominated by the opposition party and determined to accept nothing he proposes, is neither edifying nor pleasant. Nor did the much heralded conference of Democratic House and Senate leaders with the President-elect in New York perceptibly improve the situation. On the contrary, there seems to me to be less direction than before and an increased prospect that the session will be barren of results, if beer and the domestic-allotment plan are excepted. And while there are still administration friends of Mr. Hoover who contend that he will permit the beer bill to become law without his signature, I know of none who has the least doubt that he will veto both the domestic-allotment plan and the Philippine independence proposals.

Any idea that the budget will be approximately balanced, Hoover's recommendations for consolidations and mergers approved, a reduction in the veterans'-compensation appropriations made or a sales-tax bill enacted, has long ago been abandoned by all save the most optimistic. It promises to be a session particularly barren of action at a time when action is urgently needed, and the chief reason, of course, is the presence in the White House until March of the defeated President with whom Congress will not coöperate.

It really is too bad that Mr. Roosevelt must wait two more months before he is in position to use the power conferred upon him in November. Not only is this three months' delay particularly unfortunate for the country in times such as these, but it is unfortunate for Mr. Roosevelt, whose burdens will be heavier as a result, and who will have a more difficult time fulfilling his campaign pledges. The more one visualizes what Mr. Roosevelt has ahead of him, the deeper is the sympathy to which he seems entitled. He seems to me to have a harder job than any of his predecessors, certainly in this generation. The principal reason for this is that the big jobs he has before him are jobs that must be done without loss of time. If, as seems reasonably sure, nothing much is done at this session, before the middle of the summer he will have to force a farm-relief bill through Congress, put through his economy program, balance his budget and take the first big step toward the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

It is an extraordinary program—and most of it is extremely urgent. I still believe he would be wise to bend every energy toward getting as much accomplished at this session as possible—no matter how much coöperation with Mr. Hoover it involved, or how many White House recommendations he had to accept. In this opinion a good many of the more thoughtful members of his party concur, but they are powerless to proceed without the active and determined leadership and support of the President-elect.

In a few days after this piece is printed Mr. Roosevelt will leave for Warm Springs and not long thereafter he expects to go on his yachting trip, which will keep him out of touch with the congressional situation for several weeks. What he is being urged to do is to appoint someone who will represent him in Washington while he is away, and to whom House and Senate leaders can look with assurance that he will correctly interpret Roosevelt's wishes.

There might, I am afraid, be some complications in this method. Undoubtedly the three men closest to the incoming President, who have his complete confidence and are most devoted to him, are Professor Raymond Moley, Louis Howe and National Chairman James A. Farley. Professor Moley lacks the political experience and the personal acquaintance with the party politicians to function effectively in this role. To Mr. Howe the objection is made that he is unable to get along personally with certain important Democratic Senators—or they with him—and that they would resent being directed by Mr. Howe. As to Mr. Farley, while he is personally popular with all and affectionately regarded by some, his sphere is that of patronage and politics. The business of legislative decisions or party policies on public issues is a cut or two above him.

However, unless some way is found to coördinate the Democratic forces during the month of February, when things in the short session come to a head, the exhibition is likely to be a painful one and the results disappointing all around. At the moment, I do not think it is exaggerating to say that a good many Democratic Senators are more or less alarmed at the prospect. They feel that the pressure for inflation is growing stronger every day and there are in the House, and Senate too, nearly a score of monetary proposals the mere thought of which sends shivers up and down the enfeebled spines of the Eastern bankers and so-called industrial leaders. The necessity of cheapening the dollar is being daily urged on the floor of one or the other branch and it is also argued that the time has come to go off the gold standard if commodity prices are to be raised and debts rendered payable.

It is astonishing how much sentiment there is for some step in this direction in quarters where in the past any such suggestion was considered the extreme limit of economic heresy. Of course the more conservative type of Senator is appalled at the idea. In the past week several of them have gone to New York, and explained to the leading financial figures there the alleged danger of the situation and besought them to do something. Two Senators became so alarmed that they jointly introduced a bill reviving the National Defense Act of war days, providing for a board which would recommend to Congress a course to be adopted for the financial and industrial rehabilitation of the nation. This is a rather amazing proposal, I think, to come from Democrats. In effect, it seemed to assume an inadequacy upon the part of Mr. Roosevelt to deal with the situation and supply the leadership. It implies that the problems are too grave for either the President or the Congress to solve alone, and that the "best brains" of the nation must be concentrated in Washington as in wartime.

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The proposal, of course, is not practical and will not go through. The question at once is asked, If Mr. Roosevelt should name such a board, whom would he put in his Cabinet and where could he find anyone worth while? Naturally, he would have to name the best available men in the country for the new board, and his Cabinet selections would therefore be inferior as to personnel.

The idea is not to be taken seriously and I mention it here merely because it seems a most interesting and illuminating evidence of the state of mind in which some of our Democratic statesmen are at this moment. I think they are unduly alarmed over the enactment of any unsound currency-inflation legislation at this session. The almost solid opposition of the Republicans and Hoover's veto will effectually bar that before March. It is true, however, that in the new Congress there is an extraordinary number of members from the West pledged to some form of inflation. Excellent judges feel that the chances of enacting some bill that will lessen the rigidity of the gold standard and monetize silver to a far greater extent than now, are very good indeed.

Washington. T. R. B.

Sorrow's Sharp Sustaining

Lucrece, by André Obey, translated by Thornton Wilder. Belasco Theatre, December 20, 1932.

MISS KATHARINE CORNELL, despite the fact that her play will have closed before a month's run, may wisely tell herself that it is better at least than doing "The Green Hat" or Mr. Somerset Maugham's "The Letter," with their vulgar plausibility, or Mrs. Margaret Ayer Barnes' appalling "Dishonored Lady." The season, for that matter, is full of failures. If "Lucrece" is a failure as theatrical enterprise, there is, at least, much to be said for having compassed, as Miss Cornell has done, some of the great tragic pathos, some stylistic removal, something of openness and splendor in beauty. There is also that lovely sitting with her serving-women as they spin, pantomime in which Lucrece herself could not have been more perfect. Miss Cornell's venture has, also, been the means of presenting to a famished theatre some very fine costume designs and a theatrical piece that, for all its shortcomings, offers moments of technical experiment, or, at least, variation. She has plenty of reason to be proud of herself for her venture, and the mere embarkation upon it has enlarged her place in the theatre, and secured to her another point in distinction.

The play tells the Roman story known to everyone. In the opening scene of "Lucrece" two serving-men stand and listen to their Roman lords at supper. We learn that there has been a wager: returning suddenly each lord was to find out how his wife had honored him. Among all the wives only Lucrece was found properly at home, chaste, seated among her women; of the others the less said the better. We see Tarquin depart, fired with base designs. In the next scene Lucrece must welcome her royal guest and give him a room in her husband's house. Later that night the crime occurs, and the rest of the play deals with her shame and agony, her message to her husband, her resolution to die. In the last scene the mob is at the gate, calling out against the king. Lucrece tells her story and dies by her own hand and vengeance moves toward Tarquin.

I have not read Obey's "Le Viol de Lucrece"; though I should guess there is in it a certain Paris chic and rhodomontade to be found and not rarely. And I am certain that the French recitation, the command of stage eloquence that both the language and the training imply, forward a certain unity in the play's total effect and tie it all more together. In its present form, as we see it in Mr. Wilder's translation at the Belasco, the play might, with vast powers of acting spent upon it, go much better than it does now. This, however, is no particular compliment to it, since, as Dryden said of music, what passions cannot acting raise and quell! As it stands, "Lucrece" is neither rich nor simple. You have a sense of complex implications that are constantly defeated by a thin simplicity in literary manner. The dramatic moment is perpetually being dropped by this tone of extra-pellucid style-writing. There is too often some banality in the figure (hands cupped behind the ears —"cupped" hands are in every cheap story where streams flow or pity is asked—or "the vast sea of humanity"). There are, also, too many banal contrasts in phrase, though the worst banalities lie in the too obvious simplifications at many points in the writing.

So far as the chief character of the play is concerned, the climax is reached in the long speech setting forth the agony and resolve of Lucrece, a speech on which the curtain descends. This is also the climax in the defects of the writing. Nobody could say this speech. What we should have here is either to speak in rich images, a sensuous and austere movement in ideas and ornament, a compelling texture in the style, or else to speak directly and purely, the statement bared to its bones. The speech falls between these two qualities and remains only feeble, uncertain and unglamorous. All that vagueness of direction, that uncertain, self-conscious rhythm, the figures of speech lapsing into patently simple cadences, bits, for example, like that about dying calmly and serenely, or the final simile of Minerva at the bottom of the sea, such passages need abrupt poignancy or else the magnetism and magic of the high golden style of the Renaissance. As it turned out, even Miss Cornell, with her almost infallible theatricality, could do nothing with the passage. The more intensity (realistic) that she put into it, the more vacant the speech seemed, and the more vacant the speech the more evident her struggle with it. Watching the scene I understood the rape, the shame, despair and resolve to die, and that this was the heroine's reaction. The most I got out of it was that she was trying matters over to write them into a pretty book.

The result when it comes to acting such a play as "Lucrece," certainly the English form of it at the Belasco, affords an interesting problem.

These are the two sides of the situation:

To get formal delivery and movement we must go to actors more or less trained to it. Most of our better actors are trained in the realistic school and get nowhere in a formal style. Most actors capable of the formal, or poetic, style require words, speeches, fine sound rhythms, to carry them along; few of them are capable of any intense projection from within. But in this play of "Lucrece" such actors often find themselves suddenly deprived of anything to say

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or have to say little things very simple or tame or pseudo-modest and merely literary. In the last act, for instance, when Brutus and Collatine return, Lucrece tells her lord of her woes and presently falls dead, Mr. Pedro de Cordoba, who can get about with considerable sonority and pose when the dramatist treats him to the chance for it, finds himself faced with things that might have been possible to him, perhaps—and even endurable for us—by sheer eloquence and splendid posture, but that are now obliged to be done by intensity alone, by that inner pressing intensity of realism, of which he is incapable and for want of which he is left looking only foolish, racked with gallery-god sobs. Brutus fares likewise. The chivalry of Rome, indeed, appears very much dressed but not invited. The scene becomes, therefore, Miss Cornell's, whose conveyance of tragic theatre is such as can survive the impotence and thwarted stylization of the whole last scene of the play, not to speak of surviving that black mourning dress of hers, which takes its motive from Shakespeare but which looks as if it had been made for some figure in Pirandello.

Miss Cornell's performance as a whole was secure in some secret and exquisite knowledge that is a part of her gift and that makes her distinctive, elusive and miraculous in our theatre. The continuity of her performance was broken only in the scene of the long speech. This arose partly from the impossibility of the speech itself, plus the prose look of her negligée and her short hair, and partly from her lack of determination as to the style into which she would fix the role. Mr. Brian Aherne discovered a certain slender Renaissance exoticism for the part of the young Tarquin, which was a possible substitute for a more realistic brutality and lust. He showed also a certain awareness of the sensitive values in movement and pose, all of which was a good thing, since the lines he had to speak were of little help to him. Mr. Aherne's make-up was admirably heightened in color; his wig, drawn low on the brow and down on the neck like the hair of Lucius Verus in the Naples Museum, or the head of Trajan as a youth, with something about the brow heavy and Asiatic like the Bithynian Antinoüs, was a lesson in style.

The progress and scheme of the play require two narrators who sometimes accompany with words the pantomime of the characters, sometimes serve as commentary on words and actions, and now and again take on the functions of the chorus in a Greek play. Mr. Robert Loraine, whom I long since noted as a very genius of insulation, whatever the scene in which he plays, read the part of the Second Narrator, sometimes with robust privacy, sometimes with almost comic domestic inquiry and confidential ease, but without bringing much to the service of the play. Miss Blanche Yurka as the First Narrator, superb as a Sybilline figure from the Sistine frescoes, wandered at times into a kind of melodious absentia, but to a fair extent achieved both the sense and the feeling. The sum of the two narrators, however, created very little intensity or atmosphere for the play's total glamor and penetration. The problem of their use was an interesting one, as to tone, timing, accentuation and dramatic continuity.

Mr. Robert Edmond Jones' décor for the play drew, rather than on classic Rome, on the Renaissance, in devious styles and epochs for its motives. The costumes of the serving women, with the extreme fairness of their make-up, contributed to the lovely effect. The men's costumes—Tiepolo frescoes, Henri Quatre, Rubens' tapestries—very fresh in their stage note as historical costuming and very superb as design, were among the finest things our stage has seen for a long time. The scheme for the main setting consists of two curved rows of columns with their entablature and, in the space between them, at the back, a stretched cord, from which a hanging completes the background for the scenes. I thought that the whole arrangement might well have been heightened in effect, the porphyry columns, especially, which needed either more polish or more color, and the baldachino, which was a trifle tight in line and not high enough up.

For this occasion Mr. Deems Taylor has written special music. I should have imagined a great chance here for the offices of music, opportunities for following the voice, for dilating the meanings, and for preparing the luster and prophecy of the scenes as they came and followed one another.

STARK YOUNG.

Not on the Ticker Tape

Capital Takes the Rap—Fighting Deflation—Our Creditor Nation—Isolationism and Mr. Hearst—Revising the Tariff

REPUDIATION of contracts is in the air. A campaign is under way to make it respectable. The administration is backing a bill to ease the process of putting weak companies through the wringer, substituting voluntary reorganization for costly bankruptcy.

Investors in mortgages in increasing numbers are recognizing the plight of borrowers under existing deflated conditions, and are voluntarily reducing contractual interest rates. Recognizing this trend, Joseph A. Broderick, superintendent of banks in New York State, declares: "In the future, it may be necessary to effect a further reduction of rates to not more than 3 percent in order to enable savings banks to extend necessary assistance to their borrowers, who because of decreased earnings are experiencing difficulty in meeting fixed charges on mortgaged property."

Likewise in stressing the need for rediscount facilities for savings and loan institutions, the superintendent said: "To ensure the continuance of this record, the management of these associations must realize the importance of reducing dividends to shareholders to a point where they will be able to establish necessary reserves to meet possible contingencies which may arise from our real-estate situation. Because it is of vital importance to the general welfare of the state that these institutions shall not be compelled unduly to press their borrowers in the collection of loans, it is necessary that they be provided with adequate rediscount facilities."

Thus, capital is politely invited to join in taking the rap. Employment contracts and leases have likewise been subject to wholesale revision. The alternative to conscious reflation—or counter-deflation—is scarcely lovely. The financial puritans who shied at any suggestion of inflationary measures are confronted with repudiation of fixed obligations as the alternative. I stress this to indicate the extent to which our economic society has been harmed by

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a really unsound dollar, which has fluctuated violently in purchasing power and thus greatly heightened the real burden of outstanding debt in the last three and a quarter years.

The province of Manitoba, Canada, which is under the sway of the Farmers' party, has gone farthest in making repudiation respectable and within the sanction of law. The province has forbidden any foreclosures of homes and farms until the Debt Mediation Board has had an opportunity to investigate the case. The Board has the power to determine the ability of the debtor to pay under existing conditions, and, if he meets the revised terms, he is protected by the province against being dispossessed from his home or farm. Thus Manitoba has in effect a sliding-scale system of mortgages and interest rates, which are automatically attuned to changing economic conditions. Unquestionably the provincial interference is preventing wholesale social disasters. The owners of the mortgages, however, find they were mistaken in their assumption that they had purchased a fixed investment. As a matter of fact, fixity of investment is virtually inconsonant with the existing instability of our unplanned and chaotic economic society, which favors the speculator at the expense of the saver.

The chief objection to putting debt into balance with the existing gross volume of business and the current price level through repudiation of debt is that the incidence of the sacrifice is unequal. Moreover, the process is exceedingly painful, and its ultimate consequences on the solvency of our great financial institutions cannot be fully foreseen.

A middle-ground proposal is to stay on the gold standard, but greatly increase the federal debt in order to promote job-creating public works, which will tend to raise the gross volume of business.

The position of the inflationists has been restated by William Trufant Foster, head of the Pollak Foundation, who asks whether fiat money is worse than fiat poverty.

"I am proposing inflation," Dr. Foster candidly points out, "and I am not camouflaging it under some other name. I propose a correction of the disastrous deflation of the last three years, and no more. One safeguard against going too far is the horror with which we all look, and rightly look, on excessive inflation.

"Where could we get the money? We could get it by printing it, or by borrowing it. If we had sense enough —which possibly we haven't—we would print enough, and just enough. We could not possibly do any harm by putting into circulation just enough money to correct the disastrous deflation of the past three years, take up the slack of employment, utilize our productive resources, increase our standards of living and thus avert bonus marches and extreme radicalism and restore the confidence of the business world."

"Little America" sentiment appears to be sweeping over the country. People are questioning the dogmas underlying the striving to become a great creditor nation. Thomas Woodlock, writing in a philosophic vein in The Wall Street Journal, indicated that in the last analysis private foreign loans and investments may be uncollectable. Dr. Max Winkler estimates that American private investments abroad, which cost $17,000,000,000, have a present value of only $9,000,000,000.

Certain large industrialists of an isolationist bent are now saying that we never should have been a foreign lender, because the creditor position presupposes a low standard of living brought about by an influx of cheap foreign goods in which interest and principal payments are presumably made. In support of this view they cite the poverty of the London slums during the heyday of Lombard Street's financial supremacy and prosperity.

Meantime, distinctly nationalist organs, such as The Saturday Evening Post and the Hearst newspapers, are preaching the "Buy American" doctrine, just as similar agencies in other countries are crying "Buy British" or "Buy French."

In this connection, E. E. Lincoln, former Harvard economist and now consultant of the du Pont interests in Wilmington, broke into a sweetness-and-light tariff discussion at the convention of the American Economic Association at Cincinnati with the assertion that the tariff-revision doctrine was the bunk. He asserted that policies which are adapted to European conditions do not necessarily apply here. In support of this view, he said that during the peak years of 1927-1929 United States exports constituted only 6 percent of the national income, whereas exports of other trading nations amounted to from 20 to 60 percent of the national income.

But wherever theoretical right may lie, it is certain that terrific resistance is developing to downward revision of the tariff. More than ever before, the tariff has ceased to be a partisan issue. In the last campaign, President Hoover suggested this change of sentiment. When he signed the Hawley-Smoot tariff, he virtually apologized for accepting so unpalatable and unscientific a measure. While waging his 1932 campaign, however, Mr. Hoover virtually characterized the same law as a remarkable piece of statesmanship. L. M. N.

Behind Strauss's "Elektra"

TO HEAR "Elektra" at the Metropolitan is to be impressed anew with the curious blindness of the human being. One of the great modern operas, by and large one of the most affecting pieces for the lyric stage, "Elektra" plainly represents intoxicated energies directed towards death: by inevitable inference those of European society immediately previous to the Great War. Yet there is no evidence that any of the first spectators of this sinister revelation by the most conspicuous composer of his period and the one most perfectly in agreement with it, saw the dire social significance of his extraordinary creation.

It required no superhuman wisdom to perceive it. A mere capacity for recognizing the murder working around in "Elektra" would have sufficed: together with a capacity for recognizing that, while it was conceivable that a society itself not dionysically headed for the shambles might behold the expression of the deadly motives apparent in the piece, it was inconceivable that one not inwardly goaded to slaughter would find them as fascinating as European society a quarter of a century ago found them.

It is a fact that Germans were by no means the only people attracted to the first performances of "Elektra."

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The Strauss week in Dresden in January, 1909, which featured the new work, actually constituted an international event. "All Europe is here!" the concierge of Hermann Bahr's hotel proudly informed the visiting Viennese critic. But, as was the usual case with new works by Strauss, critical comment centered upon the dissonateness and monstrosity of the music *qua* music, and its unbridled dramatic expressivity; and spent itself in comparisons of the Strauss-Hofmannsthal conception with its Sophoclean prototype. Of the work's large portentousness there seems to have been little consciousness, anywhere.

Today, of course, well after the event, we have it, clearly. It is impossible to hear "Elektra" now without discerning in it, through all the immense esthetic gratifications born of a musicianly power able to articulate a large variety of dark and violent feelings, the dangerously loaded state of a hysterical, satiated society, incapable of further sublimations and craving release in blood-lettings: the very European society which discovered African art and its fearful, death-significant masks for itself. Nor is it possible to escape feeling the single direction of these energies of an almost abstract hatred, exasperation, brutality, impotent rage and perverted love, exhibited by this modern version of the old and universal drama; with its many screams, shrieks, groans and sounds of dragged bodies and laboring whips. A social consummation like the one finally reported by the frantic Chrysothemis: "courtyards filled with the heaped bodies of the slain, and survivors spattered with blood and full of wounds, and radiant, and embracing each other, and jubilating"; or one like Elektra's own orgiastic, deadly dance, seems inevitable, here.

One not only feels and smells, one actually is made to see images of battle, murder and sudden death by the words and actions of this sexual tragedy; till they grow familiar and almost desirable. Its proliferation of pictures of carnage certainly distinguishes the powerful and compact drama by Hofmannsthal supporting Strauss's music, from its Sophoclean predecessor, even more sharply than its Freudian, irreligious character motivations. It shows us an Elektra reveling amid degradation in the anticipation of the funeral rites of the murdered Agamemnon and the funereal slaughter of stallions and slaves. With the noise of dragged burdens, cracking lashes, smothered outcries, servants are seen lugging animals across the back of the scene toward the propitiatory holocaust commanded by Clytemnestra. We observe Elektra persuading the drugged, depraved, decaying Queen that only the sacrifice of a woman can appease the gods weighing heavily upon her being; and then crying out to her that the woman to be offered is Clytemnestra herself. At the false report of Orestes' death, we see Elektra throw herself upon Chrysothemis, promising to enslave herself to her if she will but help kill their mother and the paramour; then, dig in the earth with her own hands to recover the ax with which Agamemnon was slain. Following the appearance of Orestes, we hear the hideous outcries of the dying Clytemnestra; and perceive Elektra light the doomed Aegisthus to his end with poisonous irony, and at the moment his terrified face appears at the window screaming for help, ferociously scream back at him "Agamemnon hears thee!" Then we behold her dance herself in unendurable excess of joy, to her death.

And Strauss's music amply seconds the grisly evocations of the poetry. The score throughout has a royal power and an appropriateness and point singular even in Strauss. Like all his creations, "Elektra" has its share of vulgarities. The 6/4 measure of the final *cantilena,* as is so often the case with Strauss's straight expressions of feeling, verges upon common waltz-time. Chrysothemis' declaration of her yearning for the experience of maternity certainly closely approaches a sentimental *laendler.* Some of the descriptive and mimetic Wagnerian elements of the score resemble less developments of a master's ideas than conventional reproductions of them. There is something irritating in Strauss's persistent use of banalized Wagnerian trumpet calls as expressions of royal personality or descent. And the ironic music of the scenes between Clytemnestra and Elektra, and Elektra and Aegisthus, is fairly reminiscent of the music of Siegfried's final parleying with Mime.

But where the score fails in subtlety of expression, and fineness of spirit, it triumphs through energy and force. Its appropriately violent and lurid ideas; its pages like the laboring, stammering one accompanying the heavy train of animals to the sacrifice, immediately ancestral of the fearful harsh, "cubistic" music of the early Stravinsky and Ornstein, have been built up on large lines and in square blocks by Strauss's sheer theatrical genius, contrapuntal art and orchestral virtuosity, into an edifice in many ways a summit of theatric music. "Elektra" not only by far surpasses the relatively sleepy "Salomé" in point of drive and sweep and forcefulness. In spots, notably such as those of Elektra's funereal incantation, and Clytemnestra's baleful triumph at the false news of Orestes' death, and the moment of Elektra's recognition of her brother, with its screaming *tutti,* it even imposes more overwhelmingly than do Wagner's similar pages.

But what is particularly to our point is the degree to which this regal eloquence is generated under the necessity of expressing deadly emotions. It is sufficiently great to provoke one to call "Elektra" the music of fatal exasperation and hysteria. Time after time, the orchestra and voices have the significance of shrieks, wails, howls and lamentations; and lash and thunder furiously, malevolently forth and finally foam over into the unbridled, brutally triumphant coda. The blows upon the timpani seem each one to strike a man dead. It is terrifying to find the tremendous instrumental technique of Europe applied, as in this score, to the production of an expression sinister as an African mask, and indicative like it of an ambushed Goddess of Death ready to spring and swat the race like flies.

Thus one finds oneself speculating what, if anything, the revival of the work at this time signifies? Does it merely betoken one of the periodic reawakenings of Signor Gatti's artistic conscience, assisted by the recent successful revival of the piece in Philadelphia, and the late success of "Mourning Become Electra"? Or does it, one wonders, represent an "apotheosis of the Family"? "Whatever 'Elektra' is," a clever friend of ours recently remarked, "it certainly is an apotheosis of family life!" Or does it actually presage fresh slaughters, and ones close to home?

But again, as is the usual circumstance of the human being, one finds oneself delightfully in the dark.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Digest Poll and the Wet Vote

SIR: In The New Republic of April 13, 1932, I argued that the Literary Digest poll on the Eighteenth Amendment, which was then in progress, overemphasized sentiment for repeal, chiefly because the Wets returned a greater percentage of their ballot cards than the Drys. Official returns for check-up purposes are now available from eleven states which voted on prohibition in November. Comparison shows that in every case save that of Louisiana the official Wet vote was less than that reported by The Literary Digest. The discrepancies ran from one to twenty-one votes per one hundred cast, with half the cases falling in the range of six to ten votes per one hundred. If the official referenda had been held six months earlier, the differences revealed presumably would be larger, for the period intervening between the straw and official tests has witnessed a marked break in the Dry ranks. It is true, of course, that the question posed in the straw poll was repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, whereas in nine of the eleven official state referenda, the issue was repeal of the state enforcement law, but there is good reason to suppose that the popular division of sentiment on both questions is much the same.

The very large measure of unreliability thus shown for the 1932 Literary Digest prohibition poll emphasizes the fallibility of these unofficial canvasses and the necessity of a healthy skepticism in the interpretation of their results.

New York City. CLAUDE E. ROBINSON.

The War against Brooklyn Edison

SIR: Your readers will no doubt be interested in a movement which combines the interests of workers and consumers against the giant power utilities. For the past two years the Public Committee on Power Utilities and Labor has given its support to the Brotherhood of Edison Employees, who have waged a courageous single-handed and effective fight against one of the largest operating electric utilities in the country—the Brooklyn Edison Company. This company, during 1931 and 1932, while increasing its dividends by 40 percent, or a total of almost $3,000,000, laid off 5,000 men —40 percent of the total labor force.

The organizing activities of the Brotherhood of Brooklyn Edison Employees in 1931 met with organized violence against distributors of its shop paper, The Live Wire, culminating in the famous battle of Brooklyn. Ministers, students and organizers were brutally beaten by company foremen and thugs. In November, 1932, twelve peaceful picketers were forcibly dispersed by a hundred policemen, riot squads and mounted officers.

The Public Committee on Power Utilities and Labor has carried this fight to the Public Service Commission, and has established an important victory for utility labor throughout the country by obtaining an order from the Commission directing the Brooklyn Edison Company to reinstate the 5,000 employees or justify its entire labor policy before the Commission. By this action, the Public Service Commission for the first time has recognized that labor conditions within public utilities are a matter for state regulation and control.

The complaint filed with the Public Service Commission shows that the company is saving $7,500,000 a year in wages, while the rates remain at the same excessive levels. Plans have been formulated to organize consumers to back this fight before the Public Service Commission and for direct action against the Brooklyn Edison Company through a voluntary curtailment of electric consumption. This will be a movement of widespread national significance, since the electrical-utility situation is identical throughout the country.

This entire struggle has been carried on under tremendous financial handicaps. All work has been voluntary and not a single dollar has been expended for salaries or compensation of any kind to active participants. The Public Committee, however, requires substantial contributions from the consumers and labor for thoroughgoing preparations for hearings before the Public Service Commission and to carry its fight to the consumer. We believe that your readers will gladly come to the support of this great struggle. Contributions should be sent to Francis Henson, Secretary, 128 East Sixteenth Street, New York City.

ELIOT WHITE,
FRANCES A. HENSON,
A. J. MUSTE,
WILLIAM BEEDIE,
Public Committee on Power Utilities and Labor.

New York City.

The Support of India's Freedom

SIR: The Indian independence movement is one which challenges the interest and sympathy of all Americans. Here is a cause of liberty, sustained by millions of oppressed people by unprecedented methods of non-violence, which marks an epoch in history. . . .

Americans have always been quick to lend sympathy and support to other oppressed peoples. Poland, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Cuba and Russia appealed to us not in vain. Now comes the call of India! To answer this call, the American League for India's Freedom has been organized "to express American support of Indian independence through non-violence," and is now at work. Its chief source of strength is its association with the English Friends of India, an organization of British citizens, headed by Mr. Laurence Housman, in London, to obtain liberty for Indians. . . .

The American League for India's Freedom asks the courtesy of your columns to invite all friends of India to join its ranks. Our office is at 383 Bible House, New York City. . . .

DR. J. T. SUNDERLAND, Honorary Chairman,
MR. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, Chairman,
RABBI STEPHEN S. WISE, Vice-Chairman,
DR. FREDERICK B. FISHER.

New York City.

They Don't Need to

SIR: I read with interest the articles "Red Day in Washington" in The New Republic of December 21. Mr. Cowley's article was particularly interesting.

Of course, the behavior of the police and of the authorities in general was stupid, as was to be expected. But would The New Republic grant me space for just one question: What would happen if three thousand Russian hunger marchers tried to march on the Kremlin to present a petition to Stalin?

DR. WILLIAM J. ROBINSON.

New York City.

[This question, very frequently asked, is one of those which have to be rephrased before they can be answered. In its present form it assumes that the White House and the Kremlin, the American government and the Soviets, are similar in nature. They are not.

The Soviets are a dictatorship of the proletariat. What would happen if three thousand Russian bourgeois marched on the Kremlin? They would be efficiently suppressed (not executed; the day of mass executions has passed in Russia). What would happen if three thousand proletarians marched on the Kremlin? They wouldn't do so, because the Soviets are their own government. But if they ever did march, the government would yield to them, or cease to be communist.

The United States government is theoretically a government of all classes, of all the people. When police act as they did in Washington—that is as lawless agents of repression serving one class against another—they are attacking not only the hunger marchers, but also the theory (Communists would call it a fiction) on which our government is based.—M. C.]

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Politics and Ethics

Moral Man and Immoral Society, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 284 pages. $2.

THE THEME of Mr. Niebuhr's book is the cleavage between ethics and politics, between man as an individual moral being and man in his social groups. Years ago Huxley made his famous distinction between the cosmic process, by which man has survived in the struggle for existence through competitive strength, and the ethical process, by which he has built human society on the principle of coöperation and mutual aid. What Huxley did not remark is that the selfishness, pride, intolerance, cruelty, falsehood, against which the good man fights in himself by the aid of conscience, religious command or reason, pass over into the groups with which he is connected and characterize them in their dealings with one another. "Civilization," says Mr. Niebuhr, "has become a device for delegating the vices of individuals to larger and larger communities."

It is a commonplace that men release themselves from ethical standards of behavior in the accumulation of wealth by forming a corporation or a bank. The arrogance which the individual has subdued in his personal relations returns with multiplied force when he thinks of himself as a citizen resisting an insult to his national honor. It is a tragic paradox that "patriotism transmutes individual unselfishness into national egoism." The selfishness and intolerance which to the cultivated individual in his home are not merely wrong but also vulgar, are implicit in the privileged class to which he belongs:

> Individuals have a moral code which makes the actions of collective man an outrage to their conscience. They therefore invent a romantic and moral interpretation of the real facts, preferring to obscure rather than reveal the true character of their collective behavior. . . . The fact that the hypocrisy of man's group behavior expresses itself not only in terms of self-justification but in terms of moral justification in general, symbolizes one of the tragedies of the human spirit: its inability to conform its collective life to its individual ideals.

Mr. Niebuhr rejects rather tartly the various devices by which meliorists have proposed to close this gap. Rational resources, the extension of intelligence through education, he finds inadequate to combat the power of self-interest. The world had enough intelligence to avoid the War, and to make a durable peace: what it lacked was collective good will. Religion again finds its ideals singularly without application to the problems of the modern world. Christianity seeks by grace of God the salvation of the individual from a society which is outcast by original sin and on its way to the devil. The law of religion is love; the law of politics is justice. While love works miracles of union among individuals in intimate relations, classes and nations as wholes are recalcitrant to its influences. "Even a nation composed of individuals who possessed the highest degree of religious good will would be less than loving in its relations to other nations." Of the achievement of justice through political methods, Mr. Niebuhr is skeptical. Economic power underlies political power and sways it to its own ends. The self-interest of the possessing and governing class is the strongest political motive today, at least in the United States, controlling the electoral machinery and both leading parties. For a third party consisting of industrial workers, farmers and the deflated bourgeoisie, Mr. Niebuhr sees little hope.

The logical conclusion to be drawn from Mr. Niebuhr's analysis is that to make possible the translation of individual virtues into social terms, a fundamental change is necessary in society itself. Once a system is achieved in which politics embodies the principle of social justice, society will find support in individual morality, which in turn will be disciplined by an education no longer at variance with the practice of society. How such a change will be brought about is beyond the bounds of prophecy. It is a part of Mr. Niebuhr's thesis that it will not result from the pooling of individual moral resources. It may come about by revolution; it may come by catastrophe such as another outbreak of national egoism culminating in a world war. As to the former, Mr. Niebuhr combats the notion, fundamental in the ethics of the middle class, that violence is always wrong. There is nothing inherently evil but bad will. "If a season of violence can establish a just social system, and can create the possibilities of its preservation, there is no purely ethical ground upon which violence and revolution can be ruled out."

This is excellent doctrine for the happy possessors who must be prepared to share not only their superfluous individual goods, but also their class prerogatives and privileges with the disinherited. It is well for them to be reminded of the fact that their own control rests upon coercion, and that their mercenaries are quick to resort to violence in defense of a system which contradicts their cherished ethical principles. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that successful revolution is possible only when the order against which it is directed is thoroughly rotten and ready to fall from its own weakness. That time, as Mr. Niebuhr recognizes, is not yet. "There is no modern industrial state in which the number of the completely disinherited is sufficiently large, or has the possibility of becoming large enough in any imminent future, to guarantee the success of a communist revolution." Meanwhile the operation of ethical forces must contribute to the undermining of a social order which denies them, and prepare for a change which they cannot initiate, but to which they give the sanction of the best in human nature.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Homage to Spinoza

Spinoza, by Abraham Wolfson. New York: Modern Classics Publishers. 355 pages. $3.50.

Blessed Spinoza, by Lewis Browne. New York: The Macmillan Company. 353 pages. $4.

Spinoza: Liberator of God and Man, by Benjamin De Casseres. New York: E. Wickham Sweetland (The Aventine Press). 145 pages. $2.

Spinoza, the Biosopher, by Frederick Kettner. New York: The Roerich Museum Press. 263 pages. $2.50.

RATIONALISM and mysticism, perfectly reconciled in the philosophy of Spinoza, have been widely separated by many of his followers. One finds Spinozists who glow with admiration when contemplating the magnificence of the philosopher's rationalistic concept of God and the universe, and other Spinozists who, losing all sight of his reason and all control of their own, become not only "God intoxicated" but completely maudlin. The four books under review are illustrations of these conflicting attitudes. Dr. Wolfson's "Spinoza" is an effective work devoid of sentimentality. The other three biographies are highly emotional rather than thoughtful and scholarly.

In an early chapter, Dr. Wolfson makes a brief and

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interesting study of the various Jewish philosophers and poets with whose works Spinoza was familiar. Among these are Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses Maimonides and Chasdai ben Crescas, whose "Or Adonai"—the author quotes Professor Neumark in saying—was probably open before Spinoza when he was writing his "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus." The more or less scanty and undramatic material on Spinoza's life is well organized and calmly yet colorfully developed. Dr. Wolfson advances no claims to originality in treating the philosopher's life and ideas; however, besides employing some material which has hitherto remained unused by Spinoza scholars, he also places a new emphasis on certain aspects of the philosopher's character, as, for example, his extreme tactfulness and unbroken serenity. Fortunately he does not attempt to present a popularization of Spinoza's thought, which cannot be vulgarized without ignoring truth and accuracy. At the end of the book, Dr. Wolfson deals with the rise of theological Spinozism, the first representative of which was Friedrich Van Leenhof, and the influence Spinoza had on such men as Goethe, Lessing, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Nietzsche, Coleridge and Victor Cousin.

Lewis Browne begins his "Blessed Spinoza" with a summary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, of their life in Portugal and their eventual migration to Holland. Tracing back the ancestry of Spinoza and his people is an appropriate approach to the study of his life; but the author's presentation, besides being commonplace, makes one feel that his attention is centered more on arousing the reader's compassion than on impartially giving him the facts. Moreover, though we are told that Mr. Browne has made an extensive study of the source material, he presents nothing of real significance concerning the life of Spinoza which has not already been printed. His most obvious contributions are his surmises designed to embellish facts and make his story colorful. Such a practice is legitimate if the results are interesting or illuminating, but it is not legitimate if it merely leads to such a trite description as that which the author gives of Spinoza's schoolmates surreptitiously kicking, pinching and pin-pricking one another; or the bathetic portrait of the lonely philosopher who had no "wife to beam at, children to bless, nor God to thank," etc.; or the surmise of how his "frail hands must have trembled as he held his first published volume—how his eyes must have devoured the print!" This last picture is not only commonplace; it is irreconcilable with the rest of Spinoza's history.

Mr. Browne's exposition of Spinoza's thought is clear and simple, but not free from errors. He maintains, for example, that Spinozism is *"sui generis."* It is unquestionably original, yet it does draw on Platonism and Aristotelianism. The notion of a God who loves himself with an infinite and intellectual love may be found in Aristotle's "Metaphysics." Spinoza's definition of the operation of the intellect is Aristotelian, and his arguments for the existence of God in his "Shorter Treatise" are distinctly Platonic in cast. Mr. Browne's worst mistake is his elaboration of Erdman's analogy of man as a wave in the infinite sea of God. This has the effect of leading the reader farther away from a true understanding of Spinoza's intricate ideas concerning the modifications of mind and of body, and their relation to God's essence and his attributes.

Mr. De Casseres, in his "Spinoza: Liberator of God and Man," offers a similar simplification and distortion of the philosopher's meaning. In fact, he errs more in this respect than does Mr. Browne; but one judges him less severely on realizing that after all his book is a poetical eulogy—the record of a zealous moment during which the author lets off a great quantity of religious steam. "Mind" he sees swimming into its celestial ken for the first time in Spinoza, whom he regards as "Plotinus, Euclid and Zeno united." When he reads the axioms, propositions and demonstrations of the immortal philosopher, Mr. De Casseres assures us that he hears "the click of the teeth of a god biting out of the immutable laws of the universe the stanzas of the final poem."

Dr. Kettner's "Spinoza, the Biosopher" contains an accurate simplification of the simpler ideas of Spinoza, and an inaccurate simplification of many of his more abstract ideas. Dr. Kettner's first chapter, "Treatise on Understanding," is better than his second, the "Ethics," in which his explanation of Spinoza's use of the terms Attributes, Causa Sui, Modes and Substances is highly questionable; Dr. Kettner sees meanings in these which Spinoza neither implied nor admitted. The author is not content with advertising his book as an exposition of Spinozism, but insists on interpreting it "more from the point of view of a Biosophy than from that of a Philosophy." Biosophy, he says, is "that science of life which follows from the realization of our substantial nature as the cause of higher principles. . . . It is based on the affirmation of the Idea of God in our minds." The distinction between "philosophy" and "biosophy," and the absolute need of the latter term, he neglects to explain.

LIVINGSTON WELCH.

Death Makes Dividends

Death and Profits, by Seymour Waldman. New York: Brewer, Warren and Putnam (Harcourt, Brace and Company). 165 pages. $1.50.

MR. WALDMAN'S spiritedly written book tells the half-tragic, half-comic story of the War Policies Commission, created by Congress with explicit instructions to devise plans "to remove the profits of war" in the event of another conflict. After prolonged hearings, the Commission has now reported back to Congress, recommending not that profits of private munitions makers be taken away, but that, in effect, they be guaranteed on a liberal basis. The bigger the war, the higher the dividends.

This is a book which should deeply stir the anger of rank and file members of the American Legion. Since the end of the World War, the Legion has been demanding a "universal draft" in wartime of men, money and materials, and it was largely due to the Legion's pressure upon Congress that the War Policies Commission was authorized. Mr. Waldman amply proves his accusation that, in their testimony before the Commission, the high officials of the Legion shamelessly betrayed the wishes of their organization. Mr. Ralph T. O'Neil, a former commander of the Legion, explained the universal draft was simply a "popular name," and that he was firmly opposed to the government's being empowered to take over war industries and run them without profit. Mr. O'Neil thought munitions makers should retain their factories and be permitted a profit of 7 percent. Mr. Paul V. McNutt, another former commander of the Legion, felt that war profits should be "about equal" to those of peace. A full chapter of Mr. Waldman's book is devoted to the War Department's "industrial mobilization" plan, another subject considered by the War Policies Commission. Assistant Secretary of War Frederick H. Payne, whom, curiously enough, Mr. Waldman fails to mention, has for some time been holding select luncheons for manufacturers, at which he explains in detail what the government proposes to buy from

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them in case of war. No better plan for persuading American business men to view the approach of war with equanimity, not to say cheerfulness, could be imagined, and Mr. Waldman deserves great credit for bringing this particular bit of War Department deviltry to general attention.

In the long list of patrioteers, industrialists and army officers who appeared before the War Policies Commission, and whose testimony is summarized by Mr. Waldman, it is immensely heartening to find five persons—Mr. Norman Thomas, Mr. Benjamin Marsh of the People's Lobby, Mr. Tucker P. Smith of the Committee on Militarism in Education, Miss Dorothy Detzer of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Mr. Robert Morss Lovett—who raised the pertinent question of why it is necessary for us to have wars at all, and why we cannot plan for a new international order of world peace.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

October Days

Lances Down, by Richard Boleslavski, in collaboration with Helen Woodward. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 333 pages. $3.

RICHARD BOLESLAVSKI is a Polish-Russian actor and director who was for some years associated with the Moscow Art Theatre. He served in the Russian army until 1917 and was in Moscow during the Bolshevist revolution. Some years later, in America, he had the good luck to fall in with Helen Woodward, who had been specializing brilliantly in human-interest advertising copy. Together they wrote a book about his war experiences, "Way of the Lancer," which a great many people took to their hearts. Now, with the same collaborator, he has produced another volume, "Lances Down," which seems likely to enjoy the same sort of success. In some ways, it has even more interest for Americans. Many people in this country who have considered the possibility of a proletarian revolution must also have wondered what part they, themselves, would play in it. What part would this friend, and that acquaintance, play? Many groups and types would be expected, by the very nature of the struggle, to fall naturally, automatically, into this camp or that. Some it is not so easy to place.

Where, for example, when the moment came, would be found the artist, the actor, the highly sensitive and, perhaps, politically innocent intellectual? As concerns the actual progress of the movement itself, of course, there is plenty of justification for the opinion that it wouldn't very much matter where he would be found; maybe, as political activization grows with the trend of the times, there would be no more innocents. None the less, a dilemma like that in which Boleslavski found himself is bound to interest, and to move, all those who have thought along these lines.

Boleslavski returned to Moscow from the Eastern front during the revolutionary false dawn that broke with the February Days. There was no more Tsar; Kerensky sat in the Winter Palace; Democracy was the watchword; most people, like the author, didn't know the dawn was false. War-sick, he fell back gratefully into the motherly lap of the Moscow Art Theatre. Then one November night Bolshevik machine guns rang down the curtain on the provisional government. In the days that followed Moscow became a crazy Red and White checkerboard. Boleslavski made diligent search within himself to see where he belonged. It was not easy; the whole thing was incomprehensible; he was hopelessly muddled. Finally, and mostly on the strength of his foreign birth and lack of political prejudice, he decided to stay, if he could, on the sidelines. He joined his colleagues (also, with one exception, non-participant) at the little Studio they had started as an offshoot of the Art Theatre. Here, directly across the street from Communist headquarters, and living among the properties of their loved stage, the group watched out the bloody days of fighting.

The record of these days is exceptionally exciting and well written. Boleslavski wandered about the streets like a soul in hell, a Red permit in his pocket, the White password in his mind and the fascination of horror in his eyes. The things he saw, as he admits, were not at the time understood in relation to the forces they expressed. There is no feeling conveyed of mass action. Rather, the events are presented as isolated dramatic incidents, short stories, silhouettes, sketches. Sometimes even childhood reminiscences intrude for a chapter or two between tales of violence; or a couple of actors tell their love while the guns thunder. It is greatly to the credit of the author that these interludes do not detract from the book: on the contrary they most effectively point the excitement, desperation and terror of those galvanic times. In the writing there is no bitterness, no rancor; there is modest humor, tolerance and a decent sentimentality. There are also qualities of expression that have the unusual effect of making the reader feel a personal affection for the writer.

Under such circumstances, it would be out of place to fight with him on points that are not of great importance to the enjoyment of the book. Some mention may be made, however, of his latter-day conclusions on the nature of the uprising. Though at the time it occurred he was a victim of a paralysis of decision that infected thousands, he feels that, in retrospect, he understands the situation clearly. Still on the sidelines, he does not find "right" or "wrong" lying exclusively with either side. He now sees the revolution as inevitable: not historically, economically inevitable, but as a sort of foreordained gesture in the direction of spiritual truth. His picture of the Russian mass is of a sleeper who dreams. He awoke once to make some changes, "and now the Russian people will go to sleep again." Obviously, these are not ideas that can be tested pragmatically. They help the author to interpret his past, but they do not help his readers to understand what is happening in the land of the Soviets.

DONALD MINOT YOUNG.

An Intelligent Novel

The Sleepwalkers, by Hermann Broch. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $3.

EDWIN MUIR has the highest praise for this enormous German sociological novel, calling it flatly "a masterpiece." The three parts of the trilogy are "The Romantic," "The Anarchist" and "The Realist." The romantic is von Pasenow, a Prussian officer gone soft with idealism, who lacks the heart to maintain the stern old order; the anarchist is Esch, a Rhenish bookkeeper, another idealist, disappointed in his quest for a way of life; the realist, finally, is Huguenau, an Alsatian business man, the only one of the three able to cope with the conditions of a changing, shaken society. The first story takes place in 1888, the second in 1903; the threads of the trilogy form

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a pattern when von Pasenow and Esch come on the scene with Huguenau as the book ends amid the looting and outlawry of the revolution in 1918. The symbolism of the three characters is underlined throughout. In tone "The Sleepwalkers" is quite as modern as the music of Paul Hindemith; in fact, it is saturated with the "post-war" spirit, though it ends not in despair but in hope. It is above all an *intelligent* novel, filling out its immense canvas with the most exhaustive and up-to-date knowledge and showing a thorough awareness of the intellectual problems involved. It is possible that by nature Herr Broch is more a philosopher than a novelist. This seems particularly so during the last section where, sandwiched between narrative chapters, appears an essay on the "Disintegration of Values." Turning from the story to this essay, the reader feels that Herr Broch is more at home—and very interesting—when dealing directly with abstractions.

GERALD SYKES.

The Norse Kings

Heimskringla, or The Lives of the Norse Kings, by Snorre Sturlason. Edited by Erling Monsen; translated into English with the assistance of A. H. Smith. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 807 pages. $7.50.

WITH THE publication of the present—and third—English translation of "Heimskringla," one of the masterpieces of world literature becomes accessible to American readers in a single compact, scholarly and excellently translated volume. The two previous translations, published in London in 1844 and 1893, respectively, ran to three and four volumes. While the present translator generously describes the first of these as "an admirable work, most conscientiously executed," and the second as "a magnificent literary work," my own judgment is that the first is full of gross inaccuracies, besides being incomplete, while the style of the second, which is from the pen of William Morris, is so full of "quayntnesse" and false archaisms that it has become unreadable.

Snorre Sturlason, born in 1179, belonged to a powerful and distinguished family of Icelandic chiefs. He received an excellent education, probably knew a good deal of Latin and early became familiar with most of the literature known to his time. He studied law and poetry, and acquired repute as a clever *scald*. He went to Norway, where he held for a time the highest rank at the court of Haakon Haakonson. He played some small role in the events of his day. He is the author of two known works, the "Younger Edda," a kind of primer for poets, and the collection of sagas of the Norse kings which goes by the name of "Heimskringla," written about 1230.

The "Heimskringla" is composed of seventeen sagas. These vary greatly in length. The more important ones, dealing with major heroes like St. Olav, are in effect prose epics and are quite long—100 to 250 pages in the present edition. Others are short—some not over five pages—either because the protagonists are less notable or their careers very brief. Each saga is divided into short chapters of a few hundred words.

Snorre writes in a swift, lean prose that would be arid were not the matter itself so vivid and dramatic. It is frequently punctuated by quotations from poems by famous *scalds*, which are one of Snorre's most valuable and reliable sources. These are gems, highly imaginative, condensed, rich in metaphor, of which the wonderful intricacy is unfortunately lost in translation. Snorre is a master of narrative. Each saga follows a simple biographical pattern, but a less skillful writer would completely lose himself in the bewildering wealth of the material. The complicated family histories and migrations of these roving and polygamous Vikings are handled with great skill. It is no mean feat to have related with such coherence their incredible adventures—their feuds, explorations, plunderings and prolifications. Snorre's story always moves forward, and the thousands of actors and events that fill the scene do not drown the main figures. The major issues of Norway's early history—its unification, the emergence of a national consciousness, its growth as an individual nation, its policy of expansion, the progress of law and order, the introduction of Christianity—clearly emerge as themes that unify the whole work.

Snorre's most distinctive achievement is his delineation of character. Action is constantly related to character with a blunt but sure discrimination. He betrays astonishing scrupulousness in the matter of presenting the whole truth, and it apparently never occurs to him to gloss over the blemishes in his heroes' characters. One may find, in the sagas, many traits of gentleness, magnanimity and chivalry, and these sturdy men of a thousand years ago did have a deep-rooted, if stern, sense of justice. But the atmosphere is prevailingly somber. Never in history, perhaps, was life so close to death. Vengeance and cruelty lurk everywhere, the counterpart of the reckless courage that made these men invincible. A long wake of hatreds and dark deeds attends their careers. Sometimes Snorre mentions that a great warrior "died in his bed"; this seems almost to discredit him. It is a book of violent living and of violent death. And Snorre's own fate furnishes a grim epilogue to his masterpiece: he was murdered in cold blood by a kinsman in the course of a family feud.

HAAKON M. CHEVALIER.

Book Notes

INDIA

INDIA IN 1930-31, by the Director of Public Information of the Government of India. *New York: British Library of Information. 752 pages. $1.*

This annual parliamentary report is issued with the official approval of the Secretary of State for India, and allowance must consequently be made for an *ex parte* bias. In arrangement, the volume is similar to previous issues, but it is twice as bulky. Commerce, educational developments, administration, external relations, are reviewed by specialists in their respective fields. The book thus constitutes a body of sound information, fortified with excellent photographs and maps, on all phases of the Indian situation. The information is all-embracing; it ranges from recruitment figures to poppy cultivation and from oilcake exports to reincarnation. One learns with interest that the latest annual military expenditure amounted to 26 percent of the Indian budget. If read with circumspection, especially in the controversial sections, this report is of high value.

PURDAH: The Status of Indian Women, by Frieda Hauswirth Das. *New York: The Vanguard Press. 298 pages. $4.*

Unlike most studies of the purdah system, which have been academic, the present book is the work of a European woman who, having married a high-caste Hindu and spent several years with him in India, could observe the working of the system without being entangled in hereditary or racial bias. It is a pity that the greater part of "Purdah" is purely historical; the matter, though of interest, cannot be called new. It is a résumé of woman's theoretically high position from Vedic times, through the Moslem period, down to British rule. The personal account occupies a chapter of about forty pages. Miss Mayo is castigated, not for

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distortion of fact but for narrowness of vision and lack of sympathy. Among the sketches of pioneers in the movement for the resurgence of woman, Sister Nivedita, formerly Margaret Noble, stands out as Miss Slade's prototype. The author hints that Britain has no small responsibility for perpetuating vicious customs like suttee. For the general reader this is a good survey of the emergence of Hindu woman from the chattel status to a position that demands civil recognition. The book endeavors to present a rounded view without minimizing unpleasant truths.

PSYCHOLOGY

THE MORAL JUDGMENT OF THE CHILD, by Jean Piaget. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 419 pages. $3.75.*

Having already contributed largely to our knowledge of the child's emotional and intellectual development, Jean Piaget—with the help of seven collaborators—now offers us a study of his moral life. Psychologists and educators will be much interested in this detailed analysis of infantile ethics, as it has grown out of "children's games," with all their complicated rules and subtle reflections of adult behavior. This approach not only places morality in a definite social setting, but permits the inclusion of a comprehensive body of material drawn from the child's own reactions to situations where "moral judgments" are called for. The special value of the book lies in revealing the sharp contrast between adult ideals of restraint and the child's normal tendency to coöperation in work and play: the conflict arising from these opposed systems of conduct being responsible for much of the harm done to the human personality in its early and most impressionable stages.

THE NATURE OF HUMAN CONFLICTS, or Emotion, Conflict and Will, by A. R. Luria. *Translated by W. H. Gantt, with a foreword by Adolf Meyer. New York: Liveright, Inc. 431 pages. $4.*

The author is a research associate of the State Institute of Experimental Psychology in Moscow. The subtitle of his book, "An Objective Study of Disorganization and Control of Human Behavior," indicates a definitely mechanistic approach to the problems of psychiatry and abnormal psychology. The debt to Pavlov and—in a lesser degree—to J. B. Watson is evident throughout this significant attempt to evaluate the abnormal in terms of quantitative physical and physiological factors. Careful experiment and the use of control methods, illustrated by numerous charts and diagrams, go far to bear out the author's contention that individual behavior systems, however dependent upon the "dynamics of tendency," conditioned reflexes and other clinical factors, cannot be fully understood without reference to the "social historical development" within which the individual has functioned. The volume is important, both for its contents and for the new approach it represents: Dr. Gantt and Dr. Meyer are to be thanked for introducing it to American readers.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS, by C. Daly King. *Introduction by Dr. William M. Marston. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 270 pages. $3.75.*

The principal argument of this suggestive book is that psychology will never advance as a "science" until it frankly accepts the problem of consciousness as basic. Mr. King, a coworker with W. M. and E. H. Marston in their recent monograph on "Integrative Psychology," skillfully lays bare the errors and deficiencies of modern psychology regarding this classic dilemma; a competent review of the position of psychoanalysis, "pan-psychism," *Gestalt,* behaviorism and the various introspective schools leads him to adopt, with reservations, the conclusions of the "unit response" theory developed by the Marstons. His personal belief, professedly influenced by M. Gurdjieff, of the celebrated Gurdjieff Institute, is that "consciousness" is the highest activity of man: "the degree of completeness of consciousness, as distinguished sharply from happiness and similar criteria, is the one valid measure of normalcy that we possess." He claims further that not only is the phenomena of "awareness" *scientifically* accessible to the actual experiencer, but that it is an integral part of the "I" and, as such, radically distinct from the "body" to which it is, by some unexplained mechanism, attached.

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Fiction

THE CAUTIOUS AMORIST, by Norman Lindsay. *New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.*

Norman Lindsay, an Australian artist and the author of an unusual novel, "Every Mother's Son," goes on a spree in this latest book, which concerns itself not too seriously with the adventures on a desert island of three men and a fine figure of a woman. Sadie matches her female strategy against three clamoring male appetites belonging irrespectively to a stoker, a journalist and a preacher. The stoker is as practical as Sadie herself: he advocates that she be divided like Gaul; the trouble is that both of his companions want to be Caesars. The journalist is making love to her on the sly; the preacher interprets his new desires as the beacons of true love. In general, "The Cautious Amorist" is a happy mixture of buffoonery and good sense, with illustrations by the author himself which successfully convey the mood of the story.

WOMEN AGAINST MEN, by Storm Jameson. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.*

The title seems to imply a book that deals with the hopeless struggle of women in a man's world, but the book itself is better than that. Such tragedy as unfolds in these three stories is implicit for men and women alike in the traits of self-dramatization, emotional willfulness and delusions of grandeur with which Miss Jameson endows her characters. Victoria, whose successive attacks of "blood awareness" with attractive males are rapidly translated into best-selling novels, faces defeat through the daughter who refuses to live the role written for her by her mother. In "The Single Heart" Emily arranges to eat her cake and have it; determined to retail social position to the advantage of both her lover and herself, she embarks on deception with a clarity of purpose and disregard of her husband which is worthy of wider objectives; but her loyalty to that lover in spite of his occasional "blood awareness" of other women is an emotional handicap. In "A Day Off," the only one of the stories in which a woman battles tragic odds of birth and poverty, the sympathies of the reader are repelled by the slattern whose laziness, drunkenness and self-delusion have lost her such opportunities as she had. With her capacity for clear presentation, Miss Jameson might picture tragedies which occur to women in spite of their clear thinking, self-denial and honesty, and not because these qualities are absent.

Contributors

STUART CHASE, whose critical approach to our economic system is well known to readers of The New Republic, has published a number of books, the most recent being "A New Deal," issued last August by Macmillan.

LIEF DAHL, a graduate of Columbia University, is working as a farm hand near Newman Grove, Nebraska. He is taking an active part in the work of the Nebraska Holiday Association and was one of the leaders of the Nebraska delegation to the Farmers' Relief Conference.

MARQUIS W. CHILDS, who has recently done a series of articles for The London Spectator on Middle Western subjects, is at present in Florida writing a novel, having received a leave of absence from The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, of whose staff he is a member.

LIVINGSTON WELCH, who has contributed book reviews to various New York papers and magazines, is at present studying for his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Columbia University.

JONATHAN MITCHELL, author of "Goose Steps to Peace," was formerly a European correspondent for The New York World.

DONALD MINOT YOUNG, a frequent contributor to The New York Herald Tribune Books, is at present free-lancing in New York City.

GERALD SYKES, critic and novelist, contributed fiction to the second and third "American Caravan."

HAAKON M. CHEVALIER, the author of "The Ironic Temper: Anatole France and His Time," teaches at the University of California. Of mixed French and Norwegian ancestry, he is a direct descendant of the Yngling dynasty of Norse kings about whom Snorre Sturlason wrote his sagas.

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